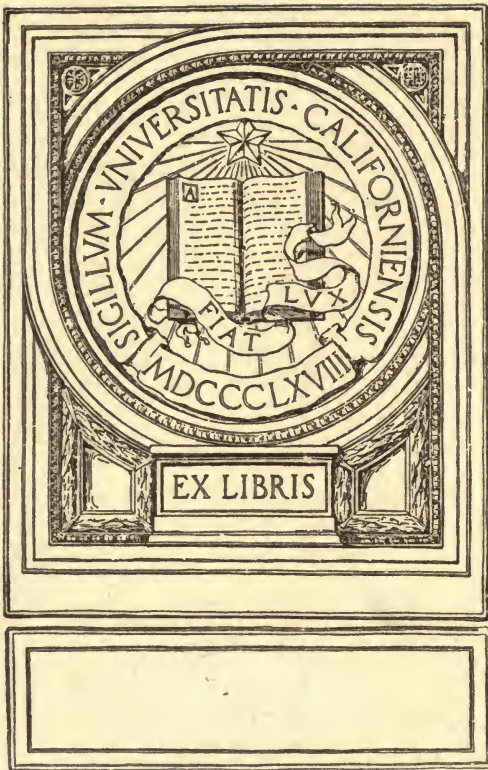


CAMPAIGNS OF A
WAR CORRESPONDENT

MELTON PRIOR



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CAMPAIGNS OF A
WAR CORRESPONDENT



Melton Prior.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD.

CAMPAIGNS OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

BY
MELTON PRIOR

EDITED BY S. L. BENSUSAN

ILLUSTRATED

THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD

1912

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TO VIND
AMERICAN

PREFACE

IT seems but yesterday that Melton Prior was sitting in his little room in the offices of the *Illustrated London News* talking of some of the experiences of his strange life, telling me, in his own inimitable fashion, "of hair-breadth incidents by flood and field."

"Why don't you set your story down?" I said to him. "Most of us who write books have not enough to say. Your only difficulty will be that you will have too much."

"I've jotted down a few notes," he said, with his usual modesty. "Will you see what you think of them?"

It was in this fashion that the first copy of his narrative came to my hands, and when I spoke with enthusiasm it was hard to convince him that I was in earnest, for he was unaware of his own gift and could not believe that his pen was wellnigh as graphic as his pencil. In the intervals of many a day's work we sat and chatted over the book that was to be, and one day he asked me if I would edit it for him. I pointed out that I was a civilian, that I had seen no more than the fringe of campaigning, and that a soldier was the best man for the task. He replied that if I would take the material and do the best I could with it, he would be well satisfied. He had yet to write up the story of the campaign that nearly broke his heart—the Russo-Japanese struggle, through which he was chained in Tokio and elsewhere under Government surveillance until the unsatisfied desire to be risking his life in the service of the great house he was so proud to represent came near to

bring about an illness. And one day, while I was still waiting for that final chapter, still looking forward to the discussion of certain points in connection with some of the campaigns, the news came that my friend's task was over, that he had seen his last fight and would never look upon his own printed record of any of them.

At the request of his widow, I have taken up the work with which he had entrusted me, content to do my best with a very difficult task, for the original manuscript runs to something like four hundred thousand words. Considerably less than half that quantity can be presented here, but what has been chosen, like what remains, is eminently readable. Just as Melton Prior knew how to pick out the subjects that made for striking illustration, so he knew how to collect from the countless incidents of his remarkable life the stories that are worth re-telling.

Diogenes himself would hardly have found a more honest man. Whatever his failings, he never scrupled to reveal them. Pretence and affectation played no part at all in his life. If he succumbs to the temptation of looting in the palace of the King of Ashanti, he makes no attempt to hide the fact. Indeed, he goes so far as to describe the precautions he took to save the loot. If he tells commanding officers that a cart is indispensable to him in order that he may take all his drawing materials, he confesses at once to the reader that these drawing materials consisted for the most part of the cases of whisky without which he could not campaign in comfort. He even offers refreshment to the commanding officers aforesaid, who, being wise men and busy, quench raging thirsts and ask no questions. If he thinks that a campaign has been carried on badly either by the General in command or by the authorities at home, he does not hesitate to say so. If he considers that any man has failed signally to justify his responsibilities, he does not for one moment pause to express himself in plainest fashion. Needless to say, these little pieces of plain speaking

will not be found in the following pages. Poor Prior consented to part with them, not without reluctance.

“Hang it all,” he said on one occasion, when I pointed out that he had ample material for two first-class libel actions on a single page, “don’t you think I know a wrong ’un when I see one? It’s all true, so what have I got to fear?” But in the end he was merciful. “They may go,” he said; “they’re not worth powder and shot.” Let no man think on this account that Melton Prior was vindictive. Those who offended him he could forgive. Those who offended his friends, or flinched from a duty because it was difficult, were marked men.

Melton Prior could not only make friends, he could keep them. He had extraordinary qualities of courage, modesty and endurance, and their attraction is perennial. Whatever the work that came to his hands, he did it with all his might, and in the service of the *Illustrated London News* he was content to take his life in his hand year after year, complaining only when the latest methods of fighting kept him from the front. To the end he never lost his good spirits; though foggy days and bronchial attacks might lessen the quality of laughter, they could not extinguish it.

But I do not wish to stand between my old friend and his public. This foreword is written merely to afford a glimpse of the man in the latter day, to set down, however feebly, a great respect and appreciation, and to ask pardon of the reader for the many shortcomings that the compression of this life-story has made inevitable. The best excuse may be found ultimately in the fact that there is ample material left for the making of another volume, should the public call for it.

S. L. BENSUSAN.

DUTON HILL, DUNMOW,
October, 1912.

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CAMPAIGNS OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

CHAPTER I

ASHANTI. 1873-4

ON or about the 3rd of November, 1873, while I was at work in my studio in Essex Street, Strand, I received a summons from Mr. Mason Jackson, then art editor of the *Illustrated London News*.

I thought it merely a call to undertake one of the commissions I had been accustomed to for years: the opening of a bazaar or a dock, the laying of a foundation-stone; but when I was ushered into the manager's room I felt intuitively that there was something more serious on hand. In the ordinary way he would have remained seated, have handed me cards of invitation or admission, and asked me to attend and prepare a sketch as soon as possible. But on this occasion Mr. Jackson rose from his chair, greeted me with a genial smile—yet withal a serious face—and looking at me through his spectacles offered his hand and said, "Well, Mr. Prior, we want you to go to the Ashanti War." At these words I felt the blood rush to my face, for at last that which I had been longing for was at hand. I was being asked to be "A Special War Artist," to go out and represent the *Illustrated London News* on an expedition which at that time was the theme of excited discussion on every hand. So I at once replied—

"Yes, sir, I shall be very pleased to go; but naturally I must first consult my wife. I will give you my decision in the morning."

On the morrow I returned to the office and announced that I was ready to serve the house to the best of my ability.

"Very well, then," said Mr. William Ingram, the proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*, who was present; "come at once to my room, and I will give you a cheque. You had better go to Silver's in Cornhill and order your kit, then to the offices of the British and African Steamship Company and secure your passage out to the Gold Coast."

A few minutes later I was in a hansom driving, first of all, to the Steamship office, where, greatly to my disappointment, I learned that no berth of any kind was procurable. I returned at once to the office and reported.

"Well, then," said Mr. Ingram, "you must go to Liverpool to-night, after you have arranged about your kit, interview the officers of the ship, and try to induce one of them to share his cabin with you."

That same evening I took train to Liverpool, where I was lucky enough to persuade the chief officer of the s.s. *Volta* to let me share his cabin. I may add that persuasion in this instance took the form of a ten-pound note. On the Tuesday we sailed. As soon as I was able to reconnoitre—I say "able" for reasons perhaps best left unmentioned—I found there was a large number of officers on board, many of whom had volunteered to go out to take part in England's little war on the Gold Coast, and it was not long before I had made friends.

How bravely do we talk of a sea voyage when on shore, but how utterly miserable do many of us feel when on the uneasy bosom of Father Neptune! I found that most of the officers, after the terrors of a night in the little stuffy cabins, not only refused to go below again for the day, but insisted on having their meals on deck; and there they sat or squatted near the entrance of the saloon, leaving the stewards to bring them such dainties as they could obtain.

By Sunday we were ready to listen to the ministrations of our chaplain. Service on board an English ship is a regulation very seldom disturbed, and though the ship was rolling and pitching heavily the army chaplain said prayers. The men who were going out to join Sir Garnet Wolseley's expedition, as well as the officers, were drawn up on either side of the quarter deck; and the clergyman, steadying himself as carefully as he could, went through the service; but it was not at

all surprising to see a man every now and then make a dash for the side and return to his position with a handkerchief stuffed in his mouth.

We got into finer weather as we sighted beautiful Madeira, which has the appearance of being built in terraces one behind the other up the mountain-side. Naturally, after such a disagreeable five days at sea, we were only too glad to get a run on shore. We formed a little party of about thirty, and made straight for the hotel, one and all of us asking for rump steaks and mutton chops; and when they arrived we did ample justice to them, I can assure you, and wound up our meal with the delicious fruit for which the island is so famous. We very naturally asked for wine of the country and "the best," but were slightly astonished when we found we were charged a guinea a bottle for it. As we had asked for the best, however, we had to pay for it; and it was a grand wine.

On our arrival at Sierra Leone a few days later, the first to come on board were the washerwomen. These coloured ladies were dressed in calico print frocks, which were not too tightly fastened at the neck; in fact, as time went on it was observable that the body of the dress, becoming unloosened, fell lower and lower, until at last it merely dangled about the waist, and it was not necessary to inform us that this particular calico dress was their only article of apparel.

Sierra Leone in 1873 was a very pretty place, seen from the sea, but on shore I was struck with what appeared to me the extreme poverty of the natives, who lived principally on rice and fruit, with an occasional piece of fowl. There was invariably a row and a fight amongst the boatmen for the honour of rowing us to shore; the charge was threepence. If in a moment of generosity any of us gave a sixpence, there was immediate grumbling and a request for a shilling. But how like a native! Treat him as a dog, and he will respect and serve you faithfully; show him any kindness, and he will immediately try to take advantage of you.

Captain Burton, in describing Sierra Leone to a friend, said it was composed of red and green (like a rotten pheasant); and the expression is a graphic one, for the natural ground is composed of iron-stone, which accounts for the red, and the green consists of a kind of grass, lining the roads save where the natives walk. There were trees on each side of the streets,

which were called by such familiar names as Oxford Street, Liverpool Street, Regent Street, &c.

We took on some live stock at Sierra Leone for Cape Coast Castle, including a large number of bullocks. I thought then, and I have thought on each occasion when I have seen it done, that the manner of hauling the bullocks up on deck by their horns is not only a brutally cruel one, but a most unnecessary way of doing it. There could be no doubt as to the animals' suffering; the expression of their eyes was conclusive.

On the Sunday I went to church, and the service was performed by a native clergyman; I made one of the four white men present.

Next morning, having bid goodbye to Sierra Leone, there was a general overhauling of kits by the officers, and it was most amusing to see the many little dainties that wives, mothers, and sisters had inserted in the trunks of my gallant companions. While this examination was going on, the doctor of the ship informed us that it was necessary or advisable that we should all be vaccinated; and a fine time we had of it.

At last we arrived at our destination—Cape Coast Castle, where heavy rollers were running in, and we could hear the surf dashing on the barren coast. To discharge cargo and get the passengers into surf boats is no easy matter, with a ship rolling as heavily as ours did. All the officers landed immediately, but I postponed my departure until the next morning, when a surf boat was placed at my disposal.

I must admit that whatever feeling of pride and elation I then entertained at being sent out to represent the most important illustrated paper in the world, was very soon doomed to go through a little cooling process. It occurred in this way. Landing is always a disagreeable process, for there is no harbour, but just an open roadstead, and the surf is tremendous. From May to August it is worst, but in December, January, and February, the Harmattan wind blowing off-shore the sea is less to be feared. The native boatmen (both cunning and avaricious), when paddling their boat to shore have a nasty way of half-hissing and half-shouting, "You plenty dash me—you dash me plenty," by which they mean to inform you, in their "pidgin-English," that they expect you to tip them liberally. Now, if by chance you do not understand what they mean, or

with an Englishman's objection to extortion you pretend to have a deaf ear, and do not reply, "Yes, me dash you plenty," they will repeat their cry, and, as though by accident, turn the boat so that the crest of a wave dashes right over, soaking you to the skin. Or perhaps, at the moment of running the boat up the beach, they will let it swing broadside on, and in the next instant you are turned completely over, with all your belongings, into the boiling surf. Such was my unhappy experience. Though I was saturated with salt water, most of my clothes and papers fortunately were enclosed in air-tight tin cases, and thus escaped injury.

While in a very miserable condition, a good-looking type of native came up, and asked me in capital English if I wanted a servant. I need not say that I jumped at the idea, and engaged him on the spot. It did not take me long in such a sun to get dry, and when I was a little presentable I asked for the Governor's house, where I was informed I should find Sir Garnet Wolseley.

As it was getting late in the afternoon, and I felt all alone in a savage country, I was not a little pleased when Sir Garnet Wolseley's aide-de-camp came out to receive me. He then advised me to go and call on Mr. George Henty, the special correspondent of the *Standard*, and gave me one of his cards as an introduction. As soon as I had told my newly appointed servant what I wanted, he said, "Oh, I know! Englishmen live round there, sir;" and, entering a native merchant's house, I was very soon ushered into a large bedroom where, in the middle of a four-post bedstead surrounded by mosquito curtains, I saw the figure of a huge man. "Excuse me, Mr. Henty," I said, "but I have been recommended by Sir Garnet Wolseley to call on you."

"Er, what's that?" said he, half asleep. "Oh, you are Melton Prior of the *Illustrated London News*, are you? Well, what can I do?"

"Well, sir," I said, "I am a perfect stranger here, this is my first trip, and if you could put me up to anything I should be very much obliged. I should like to find an hotel."

"Hotel!" said he. "There is no hotel here; but I will see what I can do for you." With that he jumped out of bed, and went down to see his landlord, who very soon found a bedroom for me on the same floor; and not at all bad quarters it proved

to be. Henty—he was one of the best friends that ever breathed—immediately said, “Of course you will dine with me, Prior, and then we can make arrangements for the future.”

At dinner I had the pleasure of being introduced to Mr. H. M. Stanley, the great African explorer (who lived in the same house), and by some unexplained means we seemed to form a friendship one for the other from that time. Both gave me all the tips and the best information they could as to what I should do and how I should do it. I was to have a hammock slung in the way usually adopted by the Europeans, and eight bearers were engaged to carry it, so that eventually I had a most comfortable carriage by day and bed for night. I had eight men and women, in addition, to carry my luggage—provisions and luxuries—which was made up into loads of a certain weight.

One of my women bearers was a very handsome Fantee, and dear old Henty used to chaff and cast eyes at her, but she always said, “No, me belong to master,” meaning poor me. Her name was Amba, which very fairly represented the colour of her skin; certainly she was not a pure native, indeed she spoke a little English.

The first or Christian names of both men and women were not numerous, there being only seven, which represented the days of the weeks in which they were born, and ran thus:—

			Men.	Women.
Sunday ...	...	...	Quasie.	Accassewa.
Monday ...	...	...	Cudjo.	Adjuwa.
Tuesday ...	...	...	Cobbena.	Abbenaba.
Wednesday	...	...	E'Qwow.	Ecouwa.
Thursday	...	...	Quaquo.	Abba.
Friday ...	...	...	Coffee.	Efuwa.
Saturday	...	...	Quamena.	Amba.

The risk of being suddenly stricken down by fever or dysentery on that pestilent coast was a terrible one, and always with us. It often happened that men perfectly well at five or six o'clock in the evening would be buried the next morning. A clergyman who was to have breakfasted with us on one occasion, sent round a letter of apology to say he was very sorry, but could not come, as he had to bury three of his servants that morning.

Once while lying quietly in bed I heard a fearful row going on in the opposite corner of the room, and upon getting up to ascertain the cause I discovered two enormous spiders fighting and squeaking just like rats. Thinking to separate them, I struck at them with a stick, cutting one in halves, the body falling to the ground and the head running away. The other spider rushed down the wall, and in his hurry and scurry to get clear, absolutely upset my cups and saucers on the shelf. This may sound like a rather tall order, but nevertheless is an absolute fact. It is also true that a beggar in the streets, after I had given him three pennyworth of coppers, simply threw them back at me. I discovered afterwards that silver was the only coin that passed in the town. If you wanted to buy a clay pipe, you were obliged to buy three or four, or if you wanted merely a few limes, you were compelled to buy a basket-load, which you could obtain for a silver threepenny-piece.

The heat of Cape Coast Castle in the middle of the day is not only overpowering, but dangerous to white people.

Very few Europeans, whether merchants or Government officials, care to expose themselves to the risk of sunstroke, and work of any kind is mostly done in the early morning or late in the afternoon; but there is a delightful breeze commonly known as "The Doctor," which blows inland from the sea about twelve o'clock, and so regularly does it arrive that one can almost depend on it to a minute.

Before telling you about my journey up country to the seat of war, I should like to mention that the natives are Fantees and are dressed in a cotton loin-cloth and sheet wrapped round them. They are chocolate-coloured and well-shaped; the women have necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and anklets, and wear their hair dressed in very original fashion; behind them they wear a cankey, or cushion, like a bustle, upon which the baby is carried. A number of these women were of immense service, acting as baggage porters, and carried upon their heads weights of fifty to sixty pounds. A fifty-pound case of preserved meat, rice, or biscuits was a comparatively light load, and they did their work for a shilling a day. Some of these women are anything but ugly. The men are rank cowards and utterly worthless as soldiers, so we made carriers of them higher up the country. When

more bearers were wanted, head-women went round the native quarters ringing a bell and calling loudly.

The women do all their laundry work, washing and hanging up things to dry in the most public manner, their costume being remarkably scanty, while native children roll and gambol in the streets together with sheep, dogs, and fowls. The squalid lanes and alleys were in some cases horrible, necessitating the use of a scented handkerchief. The floors of the dwellings are hard earth, with a gutter for the water and drainage to run off.

I wanted to sketch the interior of these mud-houses, and on going in I found a plump, comely matron grinding maize, with the inevitable baby perched on her bustle. Having prepared a dish of this for her family, she kindly invited me to try it; but somehow or other I did not feel very hungry in that house.

Mr. Collins was Commissariat Officer at the Castle, and had to start these women on their journey. Every morning, when you saw other officers with helmets and even umbrellas, you would find Collins with a straw hat and his shirt-sleeves tucked up. We used to look upon him simply as a madman, bound to get sunstroke; but I am happy to say he did not. I met him twenty-six years afterwards as a Colonel, hale and hearty as possible.

As I had been informed by the General in command that the troops would not arrive for some time at the River Prah, which was the boundary of Ashanti, I determined to go forward slowly and make short marches in order to sketch the different villages, the life of the people I met on the road, and the general arrangements of commissariat depôts which had been established at intervals of every eight or ten miles.

The road from Cape Coast Castle to Coomassie, our destination, was through a dense forest, with a path only wide enough for the natives to walk in Indian file. Of course this would not suit British troops; and therefore, as we advanced, the sappers and Engineer corps had to cut down trees and brushwood to make the road wide enough for the requirements of our little army.

Each village was turned into a kind of advance post, at which stores were collected; and I do not think I missed making a sketch of a single one. When I arrived at one of

these stations a hut was generally placed at my disposal, and instead of sleeping on one of the native beds I had my hammock, in which I had been travelling part of the day, slung across the hut, and made myself exceedingly comfortable with an awning on the top, a waterproof rug thrown over me, and a lamp hanging close handy beside my revolver.

When I was about two days' march from the Prah, Henty, Stanley, and Winwood Reade caught me up, and I must say that in the heart of that tropical forest I found it very delightful to have my companions with me once again. Just before starting from a village, we were all sitting on boxes smoking and chatting of the day's work to be done, when Henty drew my attention to a green lizard on the mud wall of a hut. "Keep steady, Prior," said he, "and watch that lizard. She has designs upon the mouse down in the corner there—it is apparently stupefied with fear."

Curiously enough, the lizard seemed to control the mouse in the same manner that a boa-constrictor paralyses a rabbit before making its spring. Even while Henty spoke, the lizard, with a bound, sprang on the mouse, caught it in his mouth and ran up the wall again on about a level with our heads. Feeling very much interested, we went closer, and discovered that this lizard, still retaining the mouse in his mouth, was gradually sucking the blood out of the little animal. Having gorged itself at last, it let the mouse drop to the ground, dead. This struck Henty as such an extraordinary thing in natural history that I believe he wrote an article in some scientific journal about it.

The road up to the Prah had been so well attended to by the Engineers that travelling was quite pleasant. It was broad enough for our hammock-men to carry us along at a good pace. Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was most jovial and kind to all, appeared especially so to correspondents. We were placed on the same footing as Staff officers, and could draw rations for ourselves and servants.

I wanted to visit the battlefield of Abracrampa, and one morning I left the main path near Assiboo for that purpose.

In the bush one must walk in single file, and sometimes it is scarcely possible to do even that; for the paths are only between four and six inches wide; and arduous work it is too, particularly where the bush and grass are so high that you

have constantly to put your hands up as a protection to the eyes. It is impossible, however, to imagine the grandeur of the surrounding scenery, with cotton-trees towering up two hundred feet and more, and banyan and plantains on every side.

At last, having accomplished nine miles before breakfast, I had to give up and call my hammock-bearers, who then carried me down the narrow passage, one man at the head, another at the foot, into Abracrampa, where the first serious fighting had taken place. My head hammock-bearer knowing the locality took me to the missionary's house, where, in his absence, I soon made myself at home, and had all my luggage taken in, greatly to the astonishment of the servants there. I then sent my cook to the kitchen to prepare my breakfast, and, just as I was in the middle of it, in walked the proprietor of the house. He wished me good-day in very good English, though a black, and I apologised for turning his house inside out in this unceremonious fashion. He said I was welcome, and I then told him I was a Staff officer, and had come to see the scene of the late battle; whereupon he immediately sent for a policeman and told him to inform the king or chief of the village that a white man had arrived and desired guides. About five minutes after a very theatrical-looking man, quite superior in appearance, wearing a red band, approached me. He was preceded by policemen, two or three chiefs, and a whole retinue of servants and native villagers.

He was introduced to me, and asked to have the pleasure of shaking my hand. We had a very long talk through the medium of my missionary friend, and at last he chose out three of his principal men and sent them in front of me. We again shook hands, went through a number of signs and motions, and then parted. Then we proceeded to the field of battle, where we saw many graves, while, farther out in the bush, skeletons of Ashantis were lying about in vast numbers. On my return I was smoking a cigarette under an umbrella-tree when I observed the chief coming up again, with still more ceremony this time. He wished to present me with some palm wine; but first I invited him and then the other chiefs to drink, to make sure it was not poisoned. As they complied with my wish without hesitation, I drank a tumblerful in turn, and found it to be extremely cool and grateful.

In return for all his kindness I presented the chief with a dozen cigarettes, which pleased him immensely.

“The rats here are innumerable and immense.” (I am quoting from my diary.) “They get into the thatched roof, and twice since I have been writing I have imagined it to be raining, but at last was told it was the tricky way the rodents have of imitating rain. The ants, too, are awfully troublesome. They are half an inch long and sting fearfully. The crickets are about three inches in length, and the noise they make is as loud as a child’s rattle. So just imagine how pleasant a dozen or two of these are inside the hut, with the bush cat without, and last, but not least, a million frogs with their horrid croaking.”

I rejoined my companions, and on the following day, after some good hard marching in a sweltering heat, in almost hourly fear of being stricken down with fever, we arrived at the River Prah, where we found that the burnt village had sprung up again, but this time with huts prepared for the British troops. There were the headquarters huts and the men’s quarters, the regimental quarters, and a space had been portioned off for the correspondents, close handy to the post office and opposite Sir Garnet’s headquarters.

It was in a very good position, just at the entrance to the village or camp, but the bush and undergrowth was very thick, and would require some hard work to cut away. The first thing to do was to watch our carriers arrive and see our loads deposited in safety. As I counted mine, to make sure I did not lose any of my parcels, I missed one of my four women, but my head-man told me it was all right, and that she would arrive shortly. I was rather anxious, as I knew she was carrying between fifty and sixty pounds’ weight of whisky and claret on her head, besides the baby at her back. Sure enough, after a lapse of two hours, she turned up quite safely, and joined the other carriers, as happy as possible. The following day I noticed she was carrying two babies at her back instead of one.

Having borrowed pick-axes, spades, cutlasses, and hatchets we set to work with our men to clear the ground, but found this to be very hard work under the noon-day sun, and soon had to give in. However, we kept our numerous men at work in gangs, and by evening had cleared quite half an acre, put up two

tents, built a large hut as a dining-room, and also a bath and a store-room. The following morning we made a garden in front, which we fenced in, and altogether we were said to have the nicest little compound in camp—so much so that Sir Garnet and the Sanitary Commissioners highly complimented us on the appearance and neatness of it. Unfortunately during our labours a most untoward incident occurred. We had been working for some hours preparing our camping-ground when Captain Buckle, an Engineer officer under Major Hume, came up and said, "Sorry, gentlemen, but you will have to go ten yards farther back into the bush. The plans have been altered."

After working as hard as we had in this sweltering heat, and being nearly done up, I could not help saying to Henty, "Oh, what a jolly swindle!"

This apparently was a most unfortunate thing to have said, for the officer, overhearing me, went straight to his chief and informed him that I called him a swindler.

Major Hume sent for Mr. Henty and informed him of the indignation of his officer at having been called a swindler, and Henty, who had heard what I said, assured him that it was not meant in that way at all. Nevertheless, he came back to me and said I was a little idiot, that I had insulted an officer at the commencement of a campaign, and that I must go and apologise and put myself right.

At once I said I should be delighted to do so, and soon after did my very utmost to explain to Major Hume the circumstance, and how exceedingly sorry I was for my mistake, that I had not intended the slightest rudeness, and that it was simply a manner of speech. I asked him to give this explanation to Captain Buckle.

I have always regretted this unpleasantness or misunderstanding from the fact that the first man I ever saw dying was this very officer. He was mortally wounded at the entrance to the village of Aganassee at the beginning of the battle of Amoafu, and died very shortly after.

Marching through the hot damp forest (and it was steaming) we all more or less suffered from prickly heat; Henty and myself, I think, may be said to have indulged in it most—we were quite bad. At dinner it was really good fun to see how we four sitting round the table would look and laugh and wait to see who would be the first to have the pluck to attack his

soup, for at the first mouthful the pricking sensation was most cruel.

I was much struck with the curious appearance of the legs of the natives, both women and men, for they all appeared to have had wounds in a number of places from the knee downwards, and on inquiring I was told they were the scars of sores caused by a tiny worm which burrows under the skin, and, growing very quickly, will soon stretch almost round the leg. When fully grown it will force its head out, and this is the time when, with great care, it may be extracted completely; but if by any carelessness or haste a portion of it is left behind, a very angry ulcer will be the result. One of my native carriers suffered at Prahsu from this, and I had to leave him behind, for I was assured it would be four or five weeks before he would be thoroughly well again.

One morning we heard the sound of a bugle in the distance, and on turning out of our huts we saw the Naval Brigade coming into camp. A fine lot of fellows, fit and ready for anything, marching with light and swinging gait, and all joining in the chorus of "Johnny comes marching home, my boys," while we cheered them to the echo.

"I'm going down to the river to see if I can pot a crocodile," said Stanley to me an hour or two later. "Come along." So off we started with a couple of guns and a flask of whisky. After tramping a mile or so through the forest, we came down to a small tributary of the River Prah, and the difficulty was to know how to cross it. Presently Stanley saw a tree that had fallen over the stream a little further down, and started off cheerily in that direction, leading the way. He had nearly reached the trunk of the tree when he slipped and fell, fortunately clasping the trunk as he did so, for not a dozen yards away I saw the ugly snout of a crocodile suddenly lift itself from the water.

Safe from this imminent peril, no sooner had he reached the other side than all of a sudden I saw him give a bound in the air, and with loud cries he pulled up his trousers and began picking great insects off his bare legs. They turned out to be black ants at least an inch in length, with lobster-like claws, some of which he could not tear from his flesh.

It appeared that he had trodden on an ants' nest. So after a good pull at the whisky-flask he crawled back again over the tree, and crocodile shooting was given up.

The next morning a very amusing incident that might have been serious occurred. One of Stanley's servants was quarrelling and fighting with one of mine just outside the General's hut, utterly regardless of the consequences. They were warned off the course, but without effect, and eventually they were arrested and brought over to us with instructions from the Provost-Marshal, that we were to give them three dozen strokes with the cane or bamboo, failing that they were to be sent to the camp whipping-post.

It might be well here perhaps to explain that in all expeditions where natives were employed, the punishment of thrashing has been found the most effectual for putting a stop to the many acts of insubordination habitual to them. But from Stanley's knowledge of a camp whipping-post, and the way in which the "cat" can be administered by a bluejacket, and also from what I had seen in the fort at Cape Coast Castle, we came to the conclusion that if we wanted these boys to continue the march with us, we had better do the thrashing ourselves, since they would have been quite useless for a time after undergoing the ordeal in the camp square.

Stanley had for years been accustomed to the native tribes of Africa, and had no doubt administered punishment which would have more than astonished Exeter Hall. He at once determined to go through his part, and his servant was tied to a stake. Then, before all the correspondents' servants, numbering over one hundred men and women, he delivered, with what seemed to me no gentle hands, the three dozen strokes, as ordered, on the man's bare back. But when it came to my turn I felt as though I could not do it, and turning to Stanley I asked him if he would carry out the sentence for me.

Stanley undertook the job. So the poor boy was tied up and the caning begun, but the strokes seemed to me to be delivered with much more vigour than in the previous case. The prisoner noticed it too, as well as the fact that, whether by accident or otherwise, Stanley had given him five more cuts than he had administered to his own servant, so upon being released he sprang up, his black face distorted with rage, and declared that it was his master who should have thrashed his servant, and with oaths and menaces swore he would have both our lives. Then he disappeared into the forest. This was serious indeed, and more than I had bar-

gained for, and I think the other correspondents looked upon it as rather a grave matter, for our hammock-bearers were sent in pursuit in every direction with instructions to bring the fugitive back dead or alive.

But as evening came on, and they returned without him, it was considered a very unlucky incident, and after a consultation Stanley said no doubt the boy would try and kill us both in the night, and that we had better take it in turns to sit up, revolver in hand, and watch over each other. I was to take the first three hours, and perhaps you do not require me to assure you that I kept my part of the watch most religiously. I sat on the edge of my bed in mortal funk, keeping as far away as possible from the sides of the tent, through which I knew a long knife could easily be thrust.

The extraordinary noises made by beasts and birds in this African forest, the hissing of snakes, the croaking of bull-frogs (not to speak of Stanley's snores) quite prevented me from hearing the tread of any one approaching. But every now and then an extra weird sound would make me think the time and the man had come, and the perspiration then broke out in big beads on my head. Both inside the tent and outside it was as black as ink, and it seemed hours and hours before the time arrived for me to wake my stable companion and bid him take his turn with the revolver. At last it came, and after much shaking and yelling I succeeded in making him sit up and realise the situation.

"All right, Prior," said he at last; "you lie down now, and I'll keep watch."

But what with the excitement and suspense I had, or my long waiting, I could not sleep a wink. Over and over I rolled, sitting up at intervals, then rolling over again, until at last something or somebody stumbled over the tent ropes outside making the whole thing shake and tremble.

With my hair standing on end, I felt that my would-be murderer had arrived at last, and in a whisper I told Stanley to look out and fire. "The man's there," I said. The only reply I received was, I thought, a groan of agony, and I felt sure that Stanley had been the first victim.

Half mad with terror, I jumped out of bed and threw myself across his body. "Stanley, old chap, are you alive?" I cried;

and the reply this time came in the form of a terrible snore. He was not dead but fast asleep, and the revolver had fallen on the ground. Fortunately we were left in peace that night, otherwise I should certainly not have owed my life to Stanley.

About two days afterwards the would-be murderer found he could not get down country; no one was allowed to do so without a permit, otherwise half our carriers and servants at times might have bolted. Word was brought to me that he had returned and in a starving condition. Stanley insisted upon my making an example of him, told me to compel the boy to go down on his knees and inform him that I would give him five minutes to say his prayers before I blew his brains out. Standing with my revolver a few inches from his head, I carried out Stanley's suggestion, whereupon the poor little wretch put his face to the ground, and taking my foot in his hand, pressed it to the top of his head as a native sign that he was sorry, and would ever afterwards be faithful to me. Stanley seeing this said, "It is all right, Prior, that boy will be as good as gold now;" and sure enough he proved the most faithful servant I had out of eighteen, and even when going into Coomassie, when all my bearers left me except two, he was one who remained, the other being my head servant.

Captain Huyshe was a great friend of ours, and had done yeoman's work for Sir Garnet in surveying the roads and going on missions to native chiefs, and he had unfortunately suffered a great deal with dysentery. One day Stanley asked him to come and dine with us, and he did so. In the middle of dinner Huyshe, looking across the table at Stanley, said, "By the by, Stanley, I think you're a fellow-countryman of mine." Stanley said, "And what is that?" "I am a Welshman," said Huyshe. Drawing himself up haughtily, and looking straight at Huyshe with a fierce light in his eyes, Stanley replied abruptly, "I am an American.

We were rather taken aback, but managed to pass the incident off. Well, we had our cigars, and our whisky-and-water, and about ten o'clock Huyshe left us with a cheery "Goodbye, Henty," and "Goodbye, Prior," and we turned in. About three o'clock in the morning we heard an extraordinary hubbub in camp, and turning out to discover what it meant, we found that poor Huyshe had been taken with a sudden attack

of fever which had turned his brain. He had attacked his servant with his sword and cut off his ear. Poor Huyshe! We buried him about nine o'clock that morning. This will give you some idea of what fever can do in West Africa.

Scouting in an African forest like this was a most ticklish thing, and dangerous work. Unfortunately, the scout who had gone ahead up the Prah fell ill, and his position had to be filled. Volunteers for the post being asked for, Lord Gifford immediately placed his services at the disposal of the General, and the next thing we knew was that he had left the camp with 75 scouts to find out the whereabouts of the enemy.

Lord Gifford's scouts, or guides, were composed of Opobos, Bonny Men, Swasis, and other wild African natives, many of them well-known cannibals. With this little band of men, who were all enthusiastically and devotedly attached to their English captain, he kept in touch with the enemy, daily risking his life in obtaining and furnishing information to Colonel Buller, who was the head of the intelligence department. I am sorry to say that more than half of this little band were killed in this hazardous work, but happily Lord Gifford escaped, and his gallant behaviour and services in this war obtained for him the most coveted decoration in the British Army, namely, the V.C., which was presented to him by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, at the review which was held in Windsor Park after the little army returned from the West Coast of Africa.

By this time all diplomatic negotiations with the Ashanti King had fallen through, and there was nothing else left for us but to fight. By now, too, all arrangements had been completed for our prompt advance. The path in the forest was so very narrow that Major Hume and his Engineers were forced to make a road for us right up to the village of Egginassie. We correspondents pushed on to the front and arrived at the village of Quarman, which was within half a mile of the enemy's outposts. On the 31st of January our servants came rushing in to us with the news that the white troops were coming along, the 42nd Highlanders having the honour of leading. We all jumped up and prepared to advance, as we knew we were now in for a good fight. Presently we heard a few shots fired in our front; these came from the scouts entering and clearing the village of Egginassie. The 42nd then pushed on as quickly as they could straight through the village, further

on into the bush, and then at the top of a dell halted, and the serious fighting began.

We had three columns moving in different directions, and Sir Garnet Wolseley took up his quarters in the middle of the village. As this was the first fight in which I had ever been engaged, it made a deep impression on me. Of a certainty I shall never forget that first half-hour in the forest with slugs swarming in upon us from every point of the compass—and bringing down the leaves in a rustling shower suggestive of a gusty autumn morning in England. To seek adequate cover was impossible, and at last Henty suggested that we should make a dash for the front, where the 42nd were at it hammer and tongs. It was difficult and perilous work, but we arrived there at last, and I succeeded in making a rough sketch of "The 42nd hard at it," which subsequently appeared in facsimile in the *Illustrated London News*.

Among other incidents of the fight was this: A sergeant of the regiment had one of his chums killed beside him, the shot evidently coming from above. Looking up, he espied an Ashanti in a tree, just loading his gun for another pot shot. With that the sergeant raised his rifle, took steady aim, and caught his man, who fell to the ground in a lump, like a pheasant in a battue.

I may here mention that the correspondents were all armed with guns or rifles. I had a double-barrelled gun with swan-shot cartridges, and when the enemy at one time made an ugly rush in our direction we all let fly at them.

I soon found myself at dangerously close quarters with two Ashantis. Fortunately I had reloaded, and with my right barrel shot one man full in the chest. The other turned to fly but I got him in the back with my left, and so killed them both. The thought has often weighed on my mind whether not being a soldier, I committed murder or not. But there always came this consoling reflection, that if I had not killed them they would certainly have killed me. It was only mere matter of self-defence.

As we had not had much breakfast, we sat down by the side of a house during a little lull in the fight, and were all engaged in eating cold sausages and biscuits, when a perfect tornado of slugs came in our direction. "Hallo, Prior, you had a close shave that time," said Stanley, as he rose and took a big sh

out of the wall within two inches of where my head had been.

Close beside us was Sir Garnet Wolseley with his Staff, receiving messages and giving directions. He was engaged in drawing on the ground with his stick a plan of the fight as it was progressing, when a messenger arrived from Sir Archibald Alison asking for reinforcements. Sir Garnet turned to Colonel Greaves, Chief of the Staff, and asked him if he had any reserves. "No, sir," was the reply. Thereupon Sir Garnet sent back word to Sir Archibald to say that he could not spare any more men, and he must cut his way through with the 42nd to the village of Amoaful. I should say that the 42nd had never been resting, but had been continually fighting and advancing until at last the word was given to advance and take the village of Amoaful; and it had to be done.

Stanley, Henty, and myself pushed on, descended the hill, and passed through a dark, gloomy dell, which bore signs on every hand of how tremendously the enemy had suffered. In the gloom of the forest we saw forty or fifty of them, dead as well as dying, fearfully mutilated by our Schneider bullets. It was a ghastly experience, and we at length arrived in the village of Amoaful with feelings of intense thankfulness. Here was light, beautiful after the gloom and loneliness of the forest. To me it was a horribly sickening sight (though I got over it in time) to see man after man brought in covered with blood; to see surgeons at work with their sleeves rolled up and to hear the smothered groans of the sufferers as their limbs were being amputated.

There was one poor fellow going to have his leg cut off, and I was asked to give a little assistance in holding him. As I put my arms around him, he said, "Oh, please don't hold so tight! I am all right." He was astonishingly brave—smoked a pipe, and even spoke cheerily while the surgeon was taking off his leg.

I remember seeing Colonel Wood, now Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, walking about with a lump of cotton-wool protruding from his chin. He had been hit by a slug, which he had extracted from his chin, stuffing the cotton-wool into the cavity.

When I left England as a war artist I had never quite realised what fighting meant, and I remember only too well during the hottest moments of this battle declaring to myself

most solemnly, "Prior, if ever you get out of this fight alive, you will never catch yourself coming of your own free will into another." I felt this more particularly when I saw the surgeons at their work. How little did I think then that I should represent my paper and be engaged in sketching in a hundred and more battles in after-life!

I cannot imagine greater pluck and daring than that exhibited by our surgeons in the field. They take no part in the fighting and have no share in the excitement. Their sole duty is to go forward with their regiment right up to the fighting line, and there, exposed to shot and shell, do all they can to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded.

What I have written merely refers to the centre column which I accompanied; but I need scarcely say that the other columns headed by the Naval Brigade, were very hotly engaged in other directions. Sir Garnet came on to Amoaful, where we all spent the night. Just about midnight we heard heavy firing in the distance, and it turned out to be from the Ashantis in force, who had re-attacked the village of Egginassie, where we had left our hammock-men, carriers and luggage, with the army stores. You may imagine, then, our state of mind when we knew there were only about 50 troops left there to guard the place. Two or three companies of men and officers, however, were sent back at once to their relief.

The Ashantis had surrounded the village and it was found impossible to cut a way in, but one brave fellow volunteered, at the risk of his life, to effect an entrance and inform the Colonel in charge that assistance was at hand, that two companies would fire in one direction, to draw off the enemy, when reinforcements would force their way into the village from the other side. The ruse succeeded; but when we entered we found that all our servants had "cut and run," with the exception of one of Mr. Stanley's, three of Reade's, one of Henty's, and two of mine.

I recently came across a letter sent to my wife written at this period and headed in this manner: "In a stockade of a house in a village about ten miles from Coomassie at least—very tired and worn out, suffering intensely with prickly heat, very thirsty—just had nearly a seven hours' march."

The following is quoted from another letter written to my wife about this time:—

“The day before yesterday we had a tremendous fight, in which we lost 250 killed and wounded out of 2,000 men. I was with the Staff in the village most of the time, and the firing was incessant for over six hours. The 42nd Highlanders, who marched in the centre, fought their way on the road and eventually arrived in the village of Amoafu, which they took after a great slaughter, and the left flank also went ahead fighting and cutting their way through the forest, but the right flank was not able to advance a yard for five hours and a half, and the General actually sent out every single fighting man he could spare to their assistance.”

It was very hard work ; and really the way the Ashantis kept coming on in the face of the Schneiders, in spite of the terrible wounds they made, was brave in the extreme. They fought in the boldest manner possible, and at one time, although no one will own it, it was just a question as to whether we were not likely to come off very badly ; in fact, it was openly hinted that it was touch and go.

A doctor I was talking to received a slug on his scarf-ring, and had it not been for that it must have killed him on the spot ; as it was, it bent the ring and caused him to stagger.

On Sunday, the 1st of February, the troops were ordered to march to the village of Becquah, which was some distance off the main road. We had hoped that the chief of this place would acknowledge that he had been beaten, but as apparently he was still determined to show fight, there was nothing else to do but to “go for him.” He made a rattling good fight, though it did not last long. I went with Lord Gifford and his scouts, and when we reached the village we encountered a withering fire from the houses. Lord Gifford’s pluck was tremendous. I can remember his crying with rage because his men had not followed him up quickly enough. However, the Naval Brigade soon came up at the double, and the affair was over in a few minutes. Winwood Reade later on said that I had passed him in this rush, “like a tiger with his eyes half out of his head.” We occupied the village, and sent out small companies in all directions, but it was some time before we could effectually disperse the enemy.

As we advanced from the coast to the River Prah, a telegraph wire was put up all the way. The Ashantis no doubt thought this a fetish, and as we continued from the Prah to Coo-

massie we found that white thread had been intertwined for the entire distance amongst the trees. I am afraid this fetish had not much effect upon the fortunes of the campaign.

It was quite a common thing to come across a corpse of a man who had had his head cut off and put back the reverse way to his body, with other parts of his anatomy placed in front of him. Then again, we would see a piece of calico fastened to a tree with a spot of blood in the centre, through which a peg had been stuck—a gentle intimation that that was the form of treatment we invaders must expect.

We had defeated the Ashantis in two determined fights, and many hoped that we could get to Coomassie without another; but such was not to be the case, for we heard from Lord Gifford that the enemy was in force on the bank of the Odah, a tributary of the Prah. The leading regiment had to fight its way through ambuscade after ambuscade, and in several cases we had to go through horrible swamps, similar to that at the entrance of Amoaful. So bad were they at times that we all had to take our revolvers off and hold them above our heads, and wade almost up to the armpits; and as soon as we came to the other side, it was not an uncommon thing to lie down on the ground and put one's leg up against a tree to let the water run out of us. I remember my field boots used to get so full that I had to do this on many occasions.

In the afternoon we arrived on the banks, and Sir Garnet determined to bivouac there for the night. In the meantime Major Hume with his sappers set to work to construct a bridge across this river. Fortunately it was ready before dark, and we correspondents crossed over to the other side so as to be ready for any advance that might take place in the morning.

I was in my hammock, with Henty close handy to me, and we were congratulating ourselves that we were not sleeping on the ground, when I heard a voice call out, "Prior! Prior!" "Here!" I replied, "here!" "Where?" "Just here!" Well, it was so dark that it was impossible to see anybody or anything. So I opened the curtain of my hammock, and showed my lamp burning. To my delight I found a post that had just come up, with letters from home. There was a friendly one from my office, warning me to be careful, and if possible not to get shot, otherwise there would be an end to my sketches; and there was one from my wife, so cheery and

bright that it made me feel that I did not care now how much fighting I had to face.

Lord Gifford's scouts ascertained that the enemy were in great strength in our front, and therefore all possible military precautions were taken against surprise, and the sentries and pickets were particularly warned to keep a sharp look-out. It is a well-known fact that sentries, under these circumstances, very often become nervous; and in this case one of our native pickets, hearing a peculiar noise close beside him, raised his rifle and fired, luckily missing a braying mule, which he had mistaken for the enemy.

I believe the tremendous rain that night was rather a lucky thing for us than otherwise, for the Ashantis could not fight in it. The next morning we advanced, and it was not long before we came in contact with the enemy, and the fight waxed hot and strong; we did not halt, but kept on advancing, ever advancing.

I remember seeing poor Lieutenant Eyre lying on the ground, with a comrade pillowing his head on his arm. I was told afterwards that as Colonel Wood bade him goodbye, he drew a ring from his finger, and with his dying breath murmured, "Give this to my mother."

I think it was at this fight that Sir Archibald Alison, who only had one arm, received a wound in that, and I remember seeing him riding his mule with the reins in his teeth.

The 42nd Highlanders had the honour of leading us on this march, and they went along at a rattling pace until they arrived at the filthy marsh which isolates Coomassie, and here we one and all had to march through stagnant water, smelling frightfully of human blood, for about a couple of hundred yards. We found out afterwards that the odour was caused by the blood of human sacrifices running down into this water and contaminating it. Having passed through this with the rest, I was resting, exhausted, at the bottom of the hill leading into Coomassie, when I saw Sir Garnet and Colonel Greaves and the Staff coming through on mules. I could not resist it, but caught hold of the tail of one of the mules to help me up the hill, and, to my horror, I discovered that the rider was Sir Garnet Wolseley. He turned round and saw me as I let go, and said, "Never mind, Prior, hold on, and we two will drag you in."

As we went up the streets the Ashantis, although badly beaten, were still standing on either side of the road, rifles in hand, which the 42nds, as they advanced, promptly seized. There was a good deal of resistance at times, but a Highlander would simply take and wrench the rifle clean out of the man's hand and smash it on the ground.

When we arrived in Coomassie, I was so done up that I fell on the ground in a kind of ditch, with Henty and Stanley close handy. How I longed to see my hammock again, and lo! almost as I expressed the wish, I saw in the distance my two faithful men coming along bearing it on their heads. I yelled to them, and they soon came alongside me. Then I said, "Henty, now we will have a bottle of champagne;" for I had carried two bottles right away from the coast with the determination of opening them in the King's capital; and a tumberful much revived the three of us.

We arrived about six o'clock in the evening, and before we were allowed to rest Sir Garnet had the troops drawn up in the principal street, and gave three lusty cheers for the Queen, which seemed to astonish and frighten the Ashantis very much.

There was an order issued at once that no looting was to take place, and that any one doing so would be hanged. Unfortunately one of our policemen was caught stealing a small piece of cloth, and he suffered the penalty. And I remember how it was bungled. He was actually drawn up three times with a rope to a tree, and then one of the natives had to hold on to him by the legs before he was strangled.

The army was told they were not to use the houses, so we camped in the streets, while the Ashantis actually slept in the houses! And it rained again in torrents, but so tired were we that we gave but little heed to the elements. As we lay on the ground the Ashantis came out of the houses and brought enormous caraffes and jars with water. At first we feared it might be poisoned, but the doctor certified that it was all right, and we were mightily glad to have it. Gin was found in quantities, and this was served out to the troops as a ration.

The morning following I went down to the palace, and on going up the staircase into the King's room I was considerably astonished. It reminded me almost of a curiosity shop, or a series of second-hand shops out of Wardour Street. His bed-

room was hung with a species of chintz. His bed was at one end of the room and was supported on legs, and leaning against it was a sword, bearing the inscription, "From Queen Victoria to the King of Ashanti." At the other end of the room was a mattress covered with blue and white silk on which the Queen was accustomed to sleep, and on the floor were earthen mounds in the shape of small saucepans, which I was informed were tombstones of the King's relations. By the side of this bed were a pair of slippers with two beautiful gold buckles. I could not resist examining them; and then an idea came into my head that one would make a very handsome brooch for my wife in England, so it did not take me long to remove it from the slipper. Then I thought, if I take one only it will be missed, so I had better take the other, and nobody will know there were any at all.

On visiting other rooms I found gold pipes, gold masks, and what appeared to be tea services, and a hundred curious things for a savage enemy to prize. I am afraid that I must own to filling my pockets with the smallest things I could find, and then, having sketched all I could, I returned to my comrades.

Shortly after this Lord Wolseley sent word over to the correspondents to say that he would like to see them, and when we were arrayed in front of him he said, "Now, gentlemen, I am very sorry to have to do so, but I have no doubt you will be paying a visit to the castle, and I must put you on your honour not to take anything from it." I, with the others, naturally very reluctantly gave the necessary assurance. Presently my servant came up to me and showed me two silver daggers he had found. I immediately told him that he was wrong, and that he was very likely to be hanged for looting. He asked me what he should do, and I told him the best thing would be for him to give them to me to take care of, which he did. On reaching home I discovered, to my horror, that they were nothing but the commonest Brummagem rubbish.

I certainly did pay another visit to the castle, but did not take anything on this occasion, and it occurred to me that as I had been placed on my honour after I had helped myself, I was not called upon to return those things which I had already taken.

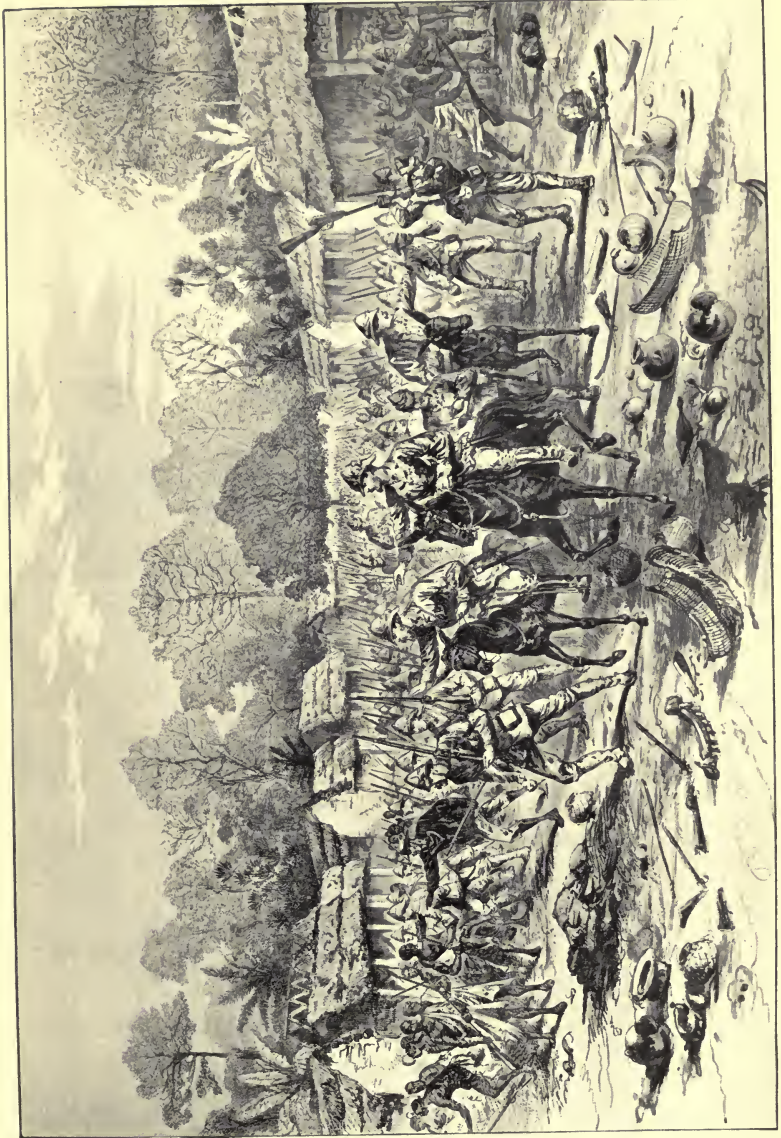
I have often been asked how it was that I enjoyed such good

health during the campaign, and I must say that I particularly attribute it to the fact that when I drank water, with or without a stimulant, I always put a teaspoonful or half a teaspoonful of Pyretic Saline in it.

As this brings me to the matter of medicines, I cannot help thinking that I lost a great opportunity of learning the secret of a very remarkable ointment. One day, on the march, as my long boots were very wet I put on a new pair, and in a short time I found that they had chafed my heels to such an extent that I could walk no longer and had to take to my hammock. The men seemed rather astonished at my remaining so long in it, and asked the reason. Then I explained, and taking off my boot and sock pointed to a raw place on my heel where the blister had broken. "Oh," said the head-man in his own language, "that's easily cured." And as we just then paused for an hour or two's rest in a village, he left me, returning after a short interval with a green greasy substance which he applied thickly to the wound, covered the latter over with a green leaf and bandaged it up. The effect of this was simply miraculous, for the following morning the wound had healed to such an extent that I was able to put on my boot and continue walking without the slightest pain or inconvenience. I afterwards discovered that this ointment was made from a certain wild herb known only to the natives, and mixed with some grease.

I must say a few words about the King's fetish slaughter-place. It was to the left of the main street as we approached Coomassie, and, of course, most of us went there. It was an utterly horrible and loathsome sight. The place consisted of a large open space with huge trees surrounding it, and thousands of skulls were lying about in all directions. Close to the entrance were thirty or more bodies with their heads cut off, evidently recent sacrifices to the god of war. I found it so difficult sketching this on account of the terrible stench that I had to make repeated visits, staying but a few minutes at a time until my work was completed.

The victims of these sacrifices were kept and well fed until the time came for their immolation. In the King's palace we found a dungeon full of prisoners, and when the door was opened and they were told to go out as they were now free men they absolutely refused. They had been fed and kept



SIR GARNET WOLSELEY ENTERING COOMASSIE, FEB. 4, 1874

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there, they said, for sacrifice, and therefore they did not want their freedom.

It seems to me from what I saw in the town, that many chiefs had their private slaughtering-house, because, on opening a door of a kind of dungeon, I saw a body lying on the ground that had evidently been tortured, the floors and walls were smeared with blood.

We were told that the King had ordered his troops to charge their guns doubly with powder as the white men had such thick skins that they were hard to kill ; this evidently accounts for the number of the enemy we found with smashed hands. It was quite evident that their guns had burst from overcharging.

Sir Garnet Wolseley, on the morning of leaving, kindly sent over to me to say he was going to send Lieutenant the Hon. Henry Wood to England with despatches, and he would be very pleased to send any sketches I had ready. This was indeed kind, and is the reason why my sketches reached England so quickly.

The morning we left Coomassie I determined to pay another visit to the then burning palace to make some final sketches. I soon became so interested in my work that I quite forgot I had some distance to return to the main street. Eventually I started back, and to my horror I found the town in flames, and not a single one of our troops in sight. I could scarcely see for the blinding smoke as I ran along, revolver in hand, and was grateful indeed when at last I came up with the rear-guard leaving Coomassie. The last thing I remember as we quitted the burning town was the pitiful sight of a little black baby boy quietly eating bananas amid the roaring flames, quite unconscious of the fate that no doubt quickly overtook him.

The greatest trouble and worry to any general in a campaign abroad is the difficulty of commissariat and its transport ; and the same applies to-day as it did years ago. Sir Garnet Wolseley was terribly hampered in his march to Coomassie on this account, and correspondents might be a little more generous in their criticisms on this matter than they generally are. Tommy Atkins reminds me of a steam engine—keep on plying the coal and you can always keep the steam up. Feed him well and he is ready for any hardship, but deprive him in the smallest degree of his “scoff,” and he will grumble, and even seems to lose heart. Nevertheless, we all know that when

called upon in times of trouble—hungry or not—the lion in his character will always assert itself, and he will rush forward at the word of command.

There is no doubt that the final rush into Coomassie, and the incomplete smashing up of the Ashanti nation, as also the hurry back to the River Ordah, were the result of the breakdown of the transport and want of provisions. This is really not so much to be wondered at, when it is remembered that every ounce of food had to be carried 190 miles on natives' heads, through a tangled forest and rushing rivers, in a savage enemy's country, the very name of which was a source of terror to our carriers—so much so, that on the road the greatest care and precaution had to be exercised to prevent them from bolting. When crossing rivers even more than mere persuasion had to be used, and the stick as well as the boot constantly brought into requisition to get them to go forward. These carriers were like a flock of sheep—with a good one to lead, the others would follow.

The march back to the Prah was a pretty difficult one, for there were nearly six hundred sick and wounded to be carried in hammocks.

At the River Ordah the carriers, with heavy loads on their heads, had to go down the sloping bank into the water, and for some distance we could only see the heads of the tallest men above it, consequently the shorter ones would disappear altogether, so that the box or bag looked as though it was floating across the river, until the man's head gradually appeared again as he ascended the opposite bank. In many cases the carriers would hold up their loads above their heads as they crossed.

As we marched along one morning, through one of the deserted villages, I saw a poor old woman leaning up against one of the houses begging food. Suddenly, one of our native allies, a cannibal, ran forward and slashed her with a big knife. The first cut nearly severed her arm from the shoulder, and the next cut a great lump out of her neck. An officer immediately ordered him away; but there was the poor woman lying terribly mutilated on the ground. Nothing could be done for her; she had to be left to die.

On the road we were all informed that we should not be allowed to convey loot across the Prah, as Sir Garnet had

issued orders that no loot was to be taken, and there were sentries put at the head of the bridge to examine everything that went across. I thought this was rather hard lines after having collected many interesting specimens of Ashanti art, to say nothing of the one or two little articles which I had taken out of the palace, so, carefully thinking the matter over, I put everything I could into my hammock, covered my spoils with a rug, and then got in and affected illness. Of course, when I approached the bridge the sentries did not ask me to get out of the hammock for them to examine it, and therefore I got safely across. Not so with many other men; they told me with many lamentations afterwards that they had had to deliver up a lot of valuable and interesting curios.

The journey to the Prah down to Cape Coast Castle was only a matter of a few days, and fortunately the Press correspondents were offered a passage home to England in the Government steamer *Dromedary*. I had been perfectly well up the country and right down to the coast again, but the very morning of leaving I went down with sunstroke and fever. I was put into a hammock and remained for three days insensible. Henty used to come and see me, it appears, as well as Stanley, who said, "Poor Prior! I am afraid he will never reach England alive." One morning, however, I looked up and recognised him, whereupon he tore into the saloon calling out, "Prior's all right—a thousand to one on him!" Of course I did not know of this at the time, but I realised that I had been very ill by the way in which the surgeon and my chums interested themselves in me.

At St. Vincent we had to change ships, and I had to be lowered into a boat in a hammock, and hauled on board the Royal Mail Steamer for England. I fairly recovered on the road home, but I was told by my friends when I arrived that I had red hair, a yellow face, and green eyes. I can even now remember the combined expression of pleasure and astonishment depicted in my wife's face at my appearance, when she saw me at Euston Station. A cab soon took me to Ludgate Hill Station, and when I got out, and the porter was taking down my luggage, the cabman looked closely at me and said, "Are you not Mr. Melton Prior, the artist, sir?" "Yes, I am," I replied. "And have you not just come home from the war, sir?" "I have, my man." "Then I'm not goin'

to take any fare from you, sir. I am only too proud of havin' had the honour of drivin' you, sir."

I am afraid this affability cost me rather dearly, as I felt compelled to force half a sovereign upon him on the spot.

I found the effects of the fever which I had contracted very difficult to shake off, and therefore I was sent down to Hastings by the office to recuperate, with a very handsome cheque to pay expenses.

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPAIGN IN HERZEGOVINA. 1875

IN 1875, while at Athens, I received instructions to pay a visit to the insurgents in Herzegovina, and I took one of a line of steamers which travelled up the Adriatic coast, and called at Corfu and many other interesting towns on the way to Ragusa.

I found Ragusa to be a fortified town, which, if necessary, could make a good resistance to the enemy. There was one principal street, and the shops were like little cabins. The hotel I found to be rather bad, and the only things I could get to eat and enjoy were boiled eggs. I knew these were clean. I attempted a steak on arrival, but it came up swimming in black grease. I found that the two or three Europeans who were there lived on preserved meat and chocolate, so I very soon laid in a store of these; but there was only one shop in the town where I could get them, and the stock appeared to have been kept for months. English correspondents had been in the town, but had got so tired of it that they had gone to Italy for a change. There was a Russian gentleman, a Mr. Pierre de Monteverdi, whose acquaintance I made. He was correspondent to the *Russki Mir*, and in a very short time we became the very best of friends. There was a British Consul, too, a Mr. Taylor, who very kindly asked me to dine with him during my stay in town. He informed me that he always bought his sheep and bullocks alive, and the best he could get, and having kept what he required for himself, he sold the rest to his friends, for nearly all that was to be obtained from the butcher's shop was unfit for human consumption.

There were nearly two thousand refugee women and children and old men just outside the town, living in sheds, cellars, and old barracks. I paid them a visit and made sketches under

the care of a gendarme who was sent with me; but the smell was something dreadful, and the filth horrible. There was no sanitation at all, and to my horror, after I had been amongst them for over an hour, I was told that small-pox was raging amongst them. I had noticed a lot of women and children who appeared to be very ill, but it was an outrageous shame to allow them to come into the town and beg just as they pleased, and Mr. Taylor, the British Consul, actually found his son giving bread to a woman who had a babe in her arms covered with small-pox. Everybody complained, but the Government or the authorities did not seem to do anything for them.

One morning Pierre informed me that he was going up to the Herzegovinian army at Piva to take a sword of honour to present to Peco Pavlovitch, the great insurgent chief, and he suggested that I should accompany him. This suited me splendidly, so we very soon set to work to make arrangements for the journey. We took steamer from Ragusa to Rezano, where we found there was no hotel, but we met a gentleman, half Austrian and half Herzegovinian, who very kindly gave us a sofa, and a bed on the floor of his house. The next morning we completed our preparations, obtained horses, guides, and provisions, and started for the mountains. It took us nearly four hours to get up to the top, and we could be seen by the people in Rezano the whole time as we went up a winding path. And then our hard work began. There was no road, but everlasting going up and down amongst rugged rocks, and occasionally jumping from one stone to another; in many places the track was almost impassable.

After about seven and a half hours of this style of travelling we arrived at the plain of Gravoko, and found a little village, where two German doctors were engaged in ministering to twenty wounded Herzegovinians, who were lying on the bare floor of a hut, covered only with a rug. They seemed to be suffering great agony, and we watched the doctors attending to their wounds, which certainly seemed to be exceptionally bad ones. We stayed the night with the doctors, as we had to engage fresh horses and an armed escort. Pierre Monteverdi had two bravos armed to the teeth with breech-loading rifles, pistols, knives and yataghans. I had two others to look after me. These men acted as servants. We took five horses with us,

and eight more fighting men, making a little army in all about twelve. One of our braves had been to the front, and boasted of having cut off forty Turks' heads, and the other man said he had accounted for twenty-nine. These men were well known all over Herzegovina as being particularly brave.

Having arranged for our start, we next thought of a meal, but as we did not wish to touch our reserve provisions we put up with what we could obtain there, namely, some hard mutton, potatoes, and native wine. It was not so good as it ought to have been, but we made a meal. We found the road growing worse and worse, and to rest the horses after some considerable distance we stopped at a two-storied hut, where we heard there was some beer to be had, but to our disappointment we found the bottles were empty. This shop was over a slaughter-house, and the boards of the floor wide apart, so that you can imagine the smell that we enjoyed whilst searching for the beer. We only made a short stop here, and went on again until 5.30 in the evening, when we arrived at the village of Belosave. It was not a very easy matter to obtain shelter for the night, but after some time searching we found quarters in a hut and, as it was raining hard, we were not at all sorry to turn in anywhere; straw was soon produced and put in a corner, and then, throwing our rugs on this, we settled down, but the dirt and filth that were on every side are impossible to describe. There was one good thing—potatoes were to be had in plenty. These we soon boiled—and didn't we enjoy them! Previously the hostess, who was very pleased to see us, had made some coffee. The Herzegovinian coffee is noted; they roast the beans every day, and when you want the coffee they put so many beans into a mill for so many cups, and grind it into a very fine powder, and in a very short time after this it is served, so that you absolutely get the pure essence of the berry. Grinding appeared to us to be going on at all hours of the day, as the Herzegovinians are so very fond of coffee.

There was a large fire made up in the middle of the hut, and we all huddled round it for warmth. My friend Monteverdi could speak a little of the language, and obtained a lot of information by this means; but I unfortunately did not understand a word. After our meal we laid down to rest on the straw, and amidst the most horrible dirt. One of the guides

laid himself at my feet, as he said to protect and keep me warm, and the others, as well as the proprietor of the hut and children, were huddled quite close together and around us.

At three o'clock in the morning the household was astir, and coffee was being made; and after enjoying this, I made a sketch of the place and the interior of the hut, and we started again for the north.

For a little while the road was better, and at one o'clock in the day we came up with the Montenegrin army, which was protecting the frontier, and we were invited by the chief to go into his hut and warm ourselves. Monteverdi had a long chat with him, and coffee was soon made and, with a piece of bread which I had in my pocket, I found it very acceptable. The chief offered us two more Montenegrin braves to accompany us, an offer we gladly accepted, and as there were eight Russian volunteers, who had gone out to fight for the Russian cause, we invited them also to accompany us, which they gladly did; thus we made a little band of twenty-two, well armed. On our leaving, the chief presented us with some very excellent roast mutton, which we consumed shortly afterwards on the road. After continuing for about four hours more, we arrived at another village—Toupan—where we intended to pass the night. Here in a room, and on a platform about twelve inches from the ground, there appeared to be a kind of straw mattress, on which we gladly rested; but when I tell you that the only light that entered the room was from the door or from the fire, you will understand that the place was pretty dark. Strange to say, more potatoes turned up, and with a box of sardines we thought ourselves in clover. We had more coffee, and then thought of rest.

On resuming the journey the road, which had been very bad up to this point, gradually became more and more dangerous, and we had to be very careful how we went on, as we knew that the enemy's outposts were not very far from us on our right. We had ridden and walked for about four hours, when we sat down on a mountain-side to refresh ourselves. The view here was very beautiful; there was a long valley in front of us, and with the aid of our glasses we could see a fortress on our right, occupied by the Turks, and we hesitated as to whether we should go on by daylight or wait till nightfall, and then sneak by under cover of darkness.

There were mountains in front of us, and mountains on either side, and I must say as I descended into that valley I seriously questioned whether I should ever come out of it alive. We had got about half-way through when we heard two shots fired, and plainly heard the whizzing of the bullets. Our guide said it was a signal, and insisted on firing two in reply. Again more firing was heard; this again we responded to, and then our guides declared it was safe and we could go on, as some insurgents were signalling to us. And so it turned out to be, for about two hours later on, when going up the opposite mountains, we saw two men sitting like statues. They fired again; we answered. It appeared that ten insurgents, hearing that we were on the way to the camp of Peco Pavlovitch, had waited for us, as our next day's journey was likely to be a very dangerous one. We were now a little band of thirty-two; but as we were likely at any time to come across a band of fifty or a hundred Turks we should have made a very poor show against them. Still we did not fear and continued bravely on till darkness set in. We had passed over these mountains, and descended into another valley, when we heard more firing. This time our men said it was from the enemy, so we determined to pass the night where we were, and do the dangerous four hours in the early morning. Our guides very soon discovered a hut, or rather a cattle-shed, that had been quite lately used by them. This was actually within a mile of a Turkish fortress, where there were no less than two hundred Turkish soldiers. I did not know this at the time, or I certainly would not have allowed our men to make a fire to warm themselves by; but they arranged that two of their number should be on guard a short distance in advance, and they changed this guard every two hours during the night. I cannot say that I slept well, and it certainly was not conducive to sleep to know that I was so close to a Turkish fortress.

The worst was yet to come, while we thirty-two men were all huddled together in this cattle-shed. I was lying on the ground with simply a rug rolled over me, when I heard a stealthy noise and then a sudden rush. I felt certain the enemy was upon us, and that I was going to be killed. While I lay on the ground something rushed over me, and jumping to my feet I made a dash at it, to find it was simply one of a

flock of sheep that had come into the hut, where they had been accustomed to rest. We very soon turned these out, and then again tried to sleep; but a short time afterwards a man crept in and woke us all up, and informed us that a friend of his, who lived in the fortress, had told him that he had heard the Turks talking about us. They knew we were there, and they intended to attack us in the morning, actually mentioning the exact spot where they intended to do it. This brought my friend Monteverdi on the qui vive. He was an old colonel in the Russian army, and the scent of danger put him on his mettle. He very quickly decided which was the best thing to do. "Prior, we must start at once. We must travel at night, in the darkness, and get as far as we can on the road, so that when the Turks come down to look for us they will be mightily disappointed. We shall slip them." The rain was coming down in torrents, but that could not be helped; there was nothing for it but to keep on our horses and ride through it. I really believe that lots of officers have earned their V.C. with less agony of mind than I experienced that night, for I knew only too well that if captured by the Turks I should not have the slightest chance of escaping, and my life would not be worth an hour's purchase.

Well, I am happy to say we got safely through the valley, and arrived towards evening at the headquarters of Peco Pavlovitch, the notorious Herzegovinian chief. This was the village of Piva, and Pavlovitch was living in a two-storied house. As soon as my friend Monteverdi had had a chat with the attendants we were ushered up a staircase on the outside of the house, and then entered a spacious room where there was a great fire burning in the centre with men sitting all round it. I should explain that Colonel Monteverdi spoke the Slavonic language very fairly, and therefore was able to make himself easily understood, and on being introduced to Peco he explained who we were and the object of his mission. It was on behalf of many Russians sympathising with the insurgent cause to present him with the sword of honour they had subscribed for. The chief received it with what, no doubt, he meant as thanks, but which I personally thought was a growl.

I am a poor hand at describing anything, but I can see this man as he sat on the floor with his back to the wall and beckoned to me to come and sit on his left-hand side. Then

turning to me he gazed with the most awful expression I had ever seen depicted in a man. He was smoking a long pipe, he wore a silver breastplate and silver shoulder-straps, and he looked to me the incarnation of devilry. He could neither read nor write, but he had such a personality that he held the whole of the Herzegovinian army at his will; his fellow-chiefs admired him and obeyed his very slightest wish. He stood 6 ft. 6 in. in his stockings, and a more magnificent specimen of the *genus* bandit, I should say, it would be impossible to imagine. To me personally he was exceedingly kind. I thought at one time that I noticed a little nervousness in my friend Monteverdi, but when Peco ordered coffee to be made for us a smile came over his face; we then knew we were welcome and safe in his hands. This was November 27th, and it so happened that it was the time when he had commanded all his smaller chiefs to come to a big conference as to what their future plans should be in carrying on this war. Seated close to him were the notorious Bogdan, Zimonvitch, and Sochitza, and the conference was taking place—at times with some warmth, and I could see my friend Monteverdi's face change colour as the excitement grew. Suddenly a tap came on the door and an insurgent entered followed by a Turkish soldier, a magnificent specimen of a man, who stood to attention unarmed. He had brought a letter from Mookter Pasha, the General in charge of the Turkish forces which were then at Gatscho, and he asked permission to pass provisions through to the starving fortress of Goronsko. This letter was read and explained to Peco, who then pretended to read it, and with a growl tore it into small pieces and cast it into the fire. "That is my answer," he said, with which he waved his hand for the man to get out of his sight. The Turk and his insurgent keepers left the room, and he had not proceeded half-way down the staircase when I heard a shriek and a thud. The Turk had been murdered.

I sat still without venturing a word, but I could see the tiger had wakened up in Peco. With hurried words and explanations to his other chiefs, he had, no doubt, determined on his line of action. Instructions were issued, the meeting was broken up, and the company seemed to disappear.

A small room had been apportioned off for Monteverdi and myself, in which our provisions and a little luggage had been

placed, and as we went into this room we found insurgents quite busy eating up the provisions that we had brought as a reserve. We could not help ourselves, but simply had to put up with the situation. They said our bread was very good, and when we expostulated and tried to stop them from eating everything up they simply said, "Oh, it's very good, and we will give you plenty to-morrow." I lost every bit of mine. This did not prevent me from sleeping, however, for I had found very little rest on the journey up.

On the following morning I was wakened up very early to find that Peco and the chiefs were going out to examine the ground where they knew the Turks would have to march if they tried to force a passage to Goronsko, and I learnt that if the Turks did go on there was going to be a sanguinary fight.

The ground was thick with snow, and as I rode my pony on the left of this great chief he rested his hand on my shoulder in almost what seemed to me an affectionate manner. Brute as I knew him to be, I could not but help feeling safe when he acted in this manner. Proceeding along a valley, then into a kind of defile, I saw, with the aid of my glasses, a black mass in front of me; and this I was told was the Turkish army. It was coming on with the intention of giving battle, so as to attempt to save the starving fortress of Goronsko.

I could not see one of our soldiers, and I must say I felt a little bit nervous. I asked where our troops were, and then Peco patted me on my shoulder and said that my friend and myself were to go up the mountain-side on our left and await results; and this we did. On climbing up two hundred feet, I found we were surrounded by the insurgents—they were swarming everywhere, all hidden behind stones and rocks.

On came the Turks, their advance-guard passing through the defile. It was only when about half of them had got through that the firing began. It is impossible for me to describe it, as it seemed to occur as a dream, the whole thing was so quick. The rifle-firing from the splendid cover our men had taken up was certainly carried on for some considerable time without the Turks being able to reply. Then, when our men found they had demoralised the enemy, they threw down the rifle and cloak, drew their yatagans, and with a fiendish yell rushed in upon the Turks. The slaughter was simply terrible. Almost taken by surprise, Mookter Pasha's army was cut into

two—the rear part managed to escape, but I fear those in advance were killed to a man.

I had not been accustomed to fighting of this description, and therefore perhaps it had more effect on me than it has had in after-life.

It had been snowing hard all night, and the next morning the weather was delightful, and I felt ready to do anything, when Peco Pavlovitch informed me he was going over to see the fortress of Goronsko, which the Turkish army had attempted to relieve, and asked me if I would like to accompany him, which I very readily agreed to do.

We were travelling along the road on the edge of a mountain, and were just examining with our glasses the fortress, when we noticed a Herzegovinian coming round a corner of the road. For some reason or other, as soon as he espied us, he turned round and seemed to stroll back again. Peco Pavlovitch said something to the man accompanying him, and without any hesitation this man brought up his rifle to his shoulder and fired, and down fell the Herzegovinian mortally wounded.

We then hurried forward, and to my amazement and horror I found he was not quite dead, but one of our men drew his yataghan and in another instant cut his head off. They then searched his clothes, and to my astonishment I learned he was not a Herzegovinian but a Turk disguised. It was extraordinary the way in which these men had penetrated the disguise of the Turk. They found he was a spy carrying letters from the Governor of Goronsko to Mookter Pasha. Having recovered from the horror of this incident—a horror I did my very best to hide from Peco Pavlovitch—I proceeded to make a sketch of the fortress while he looked over my shoulder.

On our return we went over the battlefield of the day before. It had snowed very heavily during the night, and I noticed three curious mounds which reminded me of the way in which I had seen cannon-balls stacked at Woolwich. I asked what it was, and Peco, swinging his foot round, kicked the corner cannon-ball out, and to my horror I found it was a Turk's head. Every one of the enemy who had been killed that day had had his head cut off, and they were piled up in heaps.

These two days had furnished me with any amount of

sketches, so that I did not go out for some time. While at work in the chief's house, I heard many tales about the brutal nature of the man who was paramount leader of the Herzegovinian insurrection. The Turks had many times sent in messengers with *pourparlers*, but they seldom returned. On one occasion, I was told Peco himself tied one of these Turkish messengers to a post, and then flayed him alive. He passed his yataghan twice down the man's back, and then making a little corner piece and releasing it from the flesh, caught hold of it with his hand and wrenched it right down. I was asked if I would like to see the man, but I declined that honour. After having been served half a dozen times in this fiendish manner, salt was rubbed into the wound to assist it to heal.

I heard many more horrible tales, but I will not attempt to relate them, and I witnessed many more skirmishes, as well as severe fights; and one in particular which was a very hardly contested battle, that of Moratovitza, where the insurgents stormed a fortress which was pronounced to me as the fortress of Palonka; but whether this was the right name or not I cannot say, I only know it was given to me, and I sent it home to England under that title.

After spending several weeks with the insurgents on starvation rations, I thought it was time to return to the coast. The journey back was a little less risky, for the Turks had had so many disastrous fights that there was very little pluck left in them. Some of the paths down the mountain-side into the valleys were so steep that it was almost impossible for me to walk, and I was obliged to remain on my pony, leaving the reins quite loose, and the way the animal would pick his way down was simply marvellous. From constant use, the stones in the mountain-side had been worn by the hoofs of the animals to the exact shape of them, and into these hollows they placed their feet as they descended—a slip, and I should have been rolled to the bottom.

It is quite unnecessary for me to describe our journey down country, except to say that I had four days and a half journey with nothing to eat. Of course my friends say, "But you had some bread, or some potatoes." I simply repeat I had nothing solid past my lips for four and a half days. I fortunately had about a pint of rum, and this I mixed in my pannikin with snow and ate it like an ice.

CHAPTER III

THE TURKISH WAR. 1877

TOWARDS the end of the year 1876 the state of affairs in the East became so critical that a Conference of the Great Powers concerned in the Treaty of Paris was decided on, and was held early in December in Constantinople.

On it being announced that Lord Salisbury was going out as the British Plenipotentiary I received my travelling instructions for Turkey, whereupon I informed Mr. Ingram that I thought I would take out my wife with me.

He did not seem very pleased with the suggestion, as he thought it would "keep me from my work"; but nevertheless I determined to do so, and on reaching home at about four o'clock I startled my wife with the announcement that I was going to Constantinople, that I intended to take her with me, and that we should have to leave Charing Cross at 7.40 the next morning.

The journey had many interesting incidents that lack of space forbids me to record. We arrived at Constantinople, having spent twelve days on the journey from England, whereas it is now done in three.

Here our luggage was examined, and having been placed on the back of one of the Turkish porters, we started on foot for Misseri's Hotel, in Pera.

It is simply astonishing what these porters, called Hamals, can carry. In our case the whole of my wife's luggage, as well as my own, was packed on to one man, who climbed up this street of steps without a halt.

I was successful in obtaining a very large bed-sitting-room, and having changed our travelling clothes for something a little more civilised, we descended to the dining-room, where my wife was invited by the manager to take a seat at the left-hand corner of a long table, next to a gentleman who sat at the head, and who acted as a kind of host. He turned out to

be a Mr. Dickinson, the physician in ordinary to the ladies of the Sultan's harem, from whom we occasionally heard most interesting tales of the people of the palace.

On my left was Colonel Valentine Baker, while opposite was Mr. Drew Gay of the *Daily Telegraph*, who chanced to be dining there that night.

The conversation soon became general, and I was very amused to hear my wife's description of the terrors and troubles of her journey from England.

The difficult matter on first arriving in a foreign city is to know how to set about the work you have on hand. In this case I called upon the British Consul, a Mr. Wrench, who, I had been told, was a charming man, and would be sure to render me all the assistance possible. This I found to be true. He informed me that the preliminary Conference of the Powers would take place at the Russian Ambassador's, and advised me to call on General Ignatieff, who was the doyen of the ministers at Constantinople, and obtain permission to make a sketch of the room where the representatives of the Great Powers would assemble in their endeavour to arrive at an amicable settlement of the Eastern Question, and thus avert the impending war between Russia and Turkey.

With an introduction I found no difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission, and General Ignatieff himself showed me the room, and explained to me the position where each of the representatives of the Great Powers would sit. I then obtained photographs of these ambassadors, and my first sketch was soon finished.

Mr. Wrench also introduced me to Abdullah Frères, who were photographers to the Sultan and Court, and I paid them many a visit to obtain photographs to assist me in dealing with the work I was engaged on.

I was anxious to sketch the many forts which were on either side of the Bosphorus (the scenery of which is so beautiful that I felt I could spend many weeks on it), and it was suggested to me that I should hire a caique and go down the European side of the entrance to the Black Sea, then cross over, and return up the Asiatic side and get the boatmen to stop opposite each fort, which I could then sketch without interruption; and this I put into practice the following morning.

My dragoman engaged a large caique with two men to row it, each of whom used a pair of oars.

I managed to get sketches of every one of the forts, and on my way back, when we arrived at Fort Mahdjar, my dragoman said he had a friend there, and asked me if he might stop and call and see him.

He said he was an officer, and I replied that I would like to be introduced to him, thinking this would be a splendid opportunity for me to see the inside of one of these forts.

My man soon discovered his friend, and introduced me as a great man from England. I pretended not to be too curious, and said, "If you would like to go and have a chat and a smoke with your friend, I will sit here in the shade." Thanking me for my consideration, I saw the two disappear into the officer's house.

While there, I thought to myself how much I would like to get a sketch of the interior of one of the largest forts, and I saw a kind of sentry-box with a window in it, fixed up in the centre of a large open space. I quietly strolled towards it, went in, and sat down for the sake of the shade; but it only required another minute, when out came my sketch-book and pencil, and I was hard at work through this little open window.

While doing this, I could not help thinking how terribly careless the Turkish sentries were, to leave me uninterrupted for at least half an hour to sketch as much as I liked.

After this sketch appeared in print, I chanced to call upon the Turkish Foreign Minister, and he told me he was very much surprised at the accuracy of my sketch of the fort, and he would very much like to know how I obtained it.

I felt in a terrible fix, but in the end I owned up and told the truth, at which he seemed very much amused.

On December 26th the Marquis of Salisbury had an audience with the Sultan and informed His Majesty that a complete understanding had been arrived at between the Powers during the preliminary conference, and strongly recommended the Sultan to accept the proposals of the Powers. His Majesty replied that he greatly regretted to be compelled to decline giving his adherence, as his powers were limited by the Constitution.

The Marquis then observed that Turkey must not count upon either money or men from England. The Sultan

rejoined that it was useless to press him in the matter, since if he accepted the proposals made he risked his crown and his life.

Lord Salisbury then asked His Majesty on what he would rely for his defence in the event of war. The Sultan replied that his army and his people would defend him.

After this important interview many more sittings were held at the Admiralty, but without the much-desired satisfactory settlement being reached. The Grand Council of Turkey unanimously rejected the proposition of the Powers, and in the end war was declared between Russia and Turkey, though many months elapsed before any serious event took place.

At the Hotel Misseri, where we were staying, we found a very good table was kept, but on Christmas Eve my wife, who was horribly homesick, told my dragoman to go out and buy her something thoroughly English to remind her of Christmas—some Christmas fare—and after a long explanation he returned in about an hour, in great glee. "I have found it, madame—I have found the English Christmas fare!" upon which he produced a bottle of Hollands gin and some pea-nuts.

I was told that on New Year's Eve one should go to Stamboul, as there were many Turkish customs which might prove interesting, so I suggested to Mr. Dow, the correspondent of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, that we should go together.

We put on old clothes, I took a thick stick, and we walked down. After visiting one or two cafés, it was not very difficult to see that we were unwelcome guests, and I was about to return when suddenly a young Turk spat in my face. On the instant I raised my stick and struck him across the eyes.

As he staggered from the blow, I realised how stupidly I had acted. It was almost unnecessary for me to say "Run, Dow!" for the Turk was yelling "Giaour!" (meaning infidel, and is used as a word of contempt to a Christian) as we both started to run for our lives.

I took the same way we had come, but Dow, calling on me to follow him, took a shorter cut which he knew; unfortunately I did not hear him in time, and kept on, though at such a pace that I was actually outstripping my pursuers. I certainly did the one sprint of my life on that occasion.

Arriving at the bridge which joins Stamboul to the Christian quarter of Galata, I ventured to look round, and although I could hear the yelling crowd and dogs barking, I could not see my pursuers.

I still tore along madly, for I knew if I could only reach the other end of the bridge first, I should be in comparative safety. Another sprint, and in a few minutes I had reached the guard-house and taken refuge in a sentry-box, more dead than alive with fright and exhaustion, much to the surprise of the soldiers, who evidently thought me mad. Luckily enough a Turkish dragoman returning home was passing at the time, and I was able to explain that I had been for a walk in Stamboul and had been attacked by a Turk. I was told, of course, it was very wrong of me to have gone there at all without an interpreter, and to have gone into the Turkish café at night was madness.

I was in a terrible state of mind about Dow. I thought the crowd had given me up and attacked and killed him; but my mind was soon set at rest, for the soldiers said that another gentleman had run past them just before I arrived.

Eventually two police, persuaded by means of a little palm oil, accompanied me up to the European quarter of Pera.

Meanwhile, not having seen me, Dow continued on to the hotel, thinking I had got there first; but when my wife saw him alone and out of breath, and heard what had happened, and that he was not able to account for me, she was in a fearful state of mind, and walked about the corridor like one demented. Fortunately Lord Beaumont was there and did all he could to pacify her, and assure her I was sure to be all right, although he told me afterwards quietly that he never expected to see me alive again. Shortly afterwards as I walked into the hotel corridor I heard my wife scream, and rushing at me she fell in my arms in a semi-fainting condition.

No more New Year's tricks for me in Stamboul, thank you!

For some reason or other the Softas were very excited, and constantly vowing vengeance against the giaours—meaning us unfortunate Europeans—and several times we saw them passing the hotel and up the streets of Pera in a terribly excited state, so much so that Drew Gay and many other men actually drew up a plan and scheme as to the best way in which we could

protect ourselves in the hotel in the event of an attack. When on the following morning I was out driving with my wife one of these frenzied Turks spat on her through an open window, it was quite sufficient to make us all a little anxious, and my wife having become thoroughly homesick, I determined that I would send her back to England.

* * * * *

Having been to Athens on a special mission for my paper, I started to return to Constantinople by one of the Austrian-Lloyd steamers. I had not been long on board and was strolling the deck when a tall, handsome-looking man addressed me. "Are you going to Constantinople?" he asked; and on my reply in the affirmative, he continued, "There are only four first-class passengers, so we shall have a very quiet journey."

This was the prelude to a long and interesting conversation on ordinary subjects, during which I told him who I was and what I had been doing in Greece.

"Oh! you need not tell me who you are, for I knew that long before I spoke to you, and I also remember that you went up with King Alphonso to the front during the Carlist War."

He even mentioned the towns I visited and the sketches I made, finally astounding me by relating my wonderful escape in the trenches at Pampluna. I could stand this no longer, and suggested that I would like to know his name in turn, whereupon, with one of those smiles which no doubt had enslaved many of his adherents, he informed me he was Don Carlos.

In my astonishment I very naturally altered my style of addressing him; but he soon put me right by continuing, "I was fighting for what I thought my rights and a cause, but I lost, and I am now travelling as a private gentleman, and delighted to meet you." I found him most open and large-minded, not in the least bigoted, and a charming travelling companion, and regretted sincerely when two days later he bade me goodbye, not however without extracting a promise that I would call on him in Paris on my way back, which I regret I was not able to do.

The great Conference having proved a failure, Lord

Salisbury left Constantinople for England, and shortly afterwards we heard great doings were happening at the Palace. The Grand Vizier, Midhat Pasha, who had done so much for his country and had drawn up the new Constitution, had unfortunately fallen into disfavour with the Sultan and had been deposed.

In olden days very often the words "deposed" and "disappeared" followed each other very quickly, but on the present occasion the powerful Prime Minister of Turkey was to be exiled. Midhat Pasha was summoned to the Palace, and informed by the First Chamberlain that it was the Sultan's wish he should leave the country at once on board the yacht *Izzedin*, which was lying opposite the Palace with steam up. He was supplied with a small sum of money, allowed to send for some of his clothes, and then put to sea.

Drew Gay, who was a lively young correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in those days, took me into his confidence. He obtained information of all that was going on, and invited me to accompany him, so that I was able to sketch most of the incidents incidental to the making of a new Grand Vizier, which took place at the Sublime Porte in Stamboul. On our arrival we found there was a frightful crush of people wanting to get into the place, but soldiers were hurried up and kept them in order. Drew Gay had many friends there, and one of them, an important official, dragged us in and pushed us forward into a large room, where we found ourselves in strange company. There were officers of the Navy and Army, and officials of all kinds in gold-embroidered coats, waiting to receive and do homage to the new Vizier, whoever he might be, for strangely enough no one in that large assembly of officialdom had any knowledge of the Sultan's choice.

I have seen the Turks sitting on barrels of loose gunpowder smoking cigarettes. I have seen them drinking coffee with shells bursting all round them. I have watched them on the battlefield going forward to certain death, quiet, self-possessed, determined; but in that audience-room they were all excited, they could not keep still. Presently the band stationed outside heralded the approach of the Sultan's new premier, and all rushed to the windows and struggled for places like boys playing at football. How they peered into the crowded streets below to see who it was that rode on horseback through

the long lines of troops and the dense crowd of people! How they jammed each other into corners!—Generals, clerks, priests, pashas, anxious to see who the new-comer might be, for to them it might mean honour or disgrace, power or ruin, wealth, reward, or punishment. Some actually trembled. Nearer and nearer came the horsemen heading the procession, then troops, and at last on horseback “The Sheik-ul-Islam” came into view, clad in white and gold, followed by Edhem Pasha, the Sultan’s choice. “Edhem, Edhem!” echoed all round the room. Some smiled, some sighed, some looked doubtful; but in a few minutes we heard a great noise as of soldiers thrusting back the crowd, and, the door being opened, there entered the Sheik-ul-Islam, followed immediately by Edhem Pasha and officers. Then what a scene of bowing and cringing took place. Those who could get near leant forward and almost touched the ground with their faces. Then the Imperial “Hatt” was read, announcing that the Sultan had appointed Edhem Pasha as his Grand Vizier.

Edhem Pasha then kissed the Sultan’s seal, and a prayer having been offered up by the Sheik, we and the lesser dignitaries left the room, so that the Grand Vizier and the great ones of the Empire could consult, smile, and smoke their long chibouks while poor Midhat Pasha on board a steamer was to be seen passing down the Marmora shores—a prisoner, ruined and disgraced. “Mashallah!”

For many weeks the correspondents, amongst them George Augustus Sala, Campbell Clarke, Gallenger, Drew Gay, and many other well-known members of the Press, remained on in Pera, while peace or war was as open a question as the direction of the wind, the political vane changing from day to day.

At last I was recalled. I received a telegram from my office to return; but almost as soon as I was back in England, enjoying a holiday at Hastings, a further telegram from my office ordered me to return once more to the East, as war between the two Great Powers, Turkey and Russia, was a certainty. On the following day I started back to Constantinople, where I arrived April 27, 1877.

Having obtained a letter of introduction to Aziz Pasha, who was Chief of the Staff to Abdul Kerim Pasha—the Saidar-Ekrem (Commander-in-Chief)—I left at once by steamer for Varna.

As soon as I landed I found I was looked upon with

suspicion, and an officer examined me and my luggage most carefully, but my letter to Aziz Pasha was all in order, and I was allowed to proceed. I was, however, strongly recommended by Shevket Pasha to discard my bowler hat and wear a fez. He said I might be taken for a Russian agent and strung up to the nearest post, which was certainly the reverse of comforting; so I bought one, but found it most uncomfortable in the sun, particularly to my bald head.

From Varna I proceeded to Schumla, where I bought a horse and saddle and another with pack-saddle. I also engaged two ruffianly-looking Circassians to look after them, to protect me against their own countrymen and the Bashi-Bazouks who were prowling all over the country and round the different camps. Then I proceeded by train with men and horses to Roustchouk, putting up at the Isla Han Hotel.

On the following morning I called on the British Consul. He promised to see Abdul Kerim Pasha and endeavour to obtain a military pass to enable me to sketch in camp. He said if I attempted to go about without one I might be taken for a spy, and then gently broiled over a slow fire, as a savoury dish. The Commander-in-Chief had promised this drastic treatment to any Russian spy captured.

All the Christian population were in a great state of fear, not only on account of the promised bombardment from the Russians, but from fear of the terrible Turkish atrocities which, they were told, would take place as soon as it began. The British Consul's cook had a friend (a Turkish woman) who told her that if a massacre did commence she was to run to her house, and she would protect her, and in the last extremity if she could not protect her any more, she would cut her throat herself rather than let her fall into the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks or Circassians. I could not see where the consolation came in.

My Circassians appeared to be faithful, and never left me without permission; they even went so far as to ask me if they might go and have a bath, which is a long business in that country.

The hotel was full of correspondents, including Fitzgerald, Wentworth, and Camille Barrère. The latter being a Frenchman, had been recommended most strongly by Monsieur Gambetta to his personal friend, the Grand Vizier of Turkey, and we were naturally very jealous, for do all we could, and

bring all the influence we could to bear, we had to put up with promises.

At last the Consul obtained a servant interpreter for me, who spoke many languages; but unfortunately he turned out to be a Bulgarian from a village near Adrianople, and I presume one day, in conversation with my Circassians, he let this out, for the next day when we were down in the market-place making purchases, a police officer accosted him and asked his name. Without hesitation he replied, "Dimitry Ivanoff," whereupon the officer requested him to follow.

I naturally went with him to see what was up. As soon as we arrived at the Cour de Garde he was arrested, and informed that a telegram had been received from Adrianople directing that if found he was at once to be returned there. I protested, and did all I could for him, by going to see my Turkish friends and the British Consul, but without success. As ill-luck would have it, I had given him only a few days before £10 on account wherewith to buy suitable clothes and to send something home to his wife; and this was the last I saw of my dragoman and my money.

A few days later a great event took place in the Government Square outside the Konak. The Turkish declaration of war was read, and then the band played the Turkish national air, and, to our great surprise, "God save the Queen" followed. We all thought this a most significant thing. Was England going to join Turkey in her trouble?

I immediately sent my letter and card to the Chief of the Staff (Aziz Pasha), who kindly promised to introduce me to the Commander-in-Chief.

The introduction took place in a splendid tent. As I entered I saw a stout Turk sitting on a divan, with a stick in his right hand and a cigarette in his left. He beckoned to me to be seated on a chair near him, and immediately ordered cigarettes and coffee to be offered me.

He certainly looked most ferocious, but in reality he was exceedingly kind, and expressed himself very pleased to see the representative of such a great journal, adding that I was quite welcome to remain in camp or go to Roustchouk, and that later on I, together with the other correspondents, should be furnished with a military pass.

The country through which we passed on our journey

between Schumla and Roustchouk and back was very beautiful, and everything was remarkably cheap. Our lodgings cost next to nothing, and as for living—we could buy chickens for one penny, and a goose for fivepence, while eggs were about fivepence a hundred. Then for wine we used to pay twopence halfpenny a quart, and if we wanted some with a little extra age to it, it was fivepence a quart. I had fixed under my cart a little keg that was generally well supplied with the best class of claret.

The great question now was, as to where the Russians would attempt to cross the Danube. The Turks had sentries and vedettes all along the banks for miles, and a system of signalling by night by large torches on stakes.

One morning Mr. Camille Barrère, the Pressman who afterwards rose to the position of French Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Extraordinary, suggested to Francis Scudamore and myself that we should ride down the Danube as far as Necropolis and then to Biela to see what was going on in that direction.

We each took one servant and travelled from early morning till late at night, only halting for meals and to rest the animals. On reference to the map we found we had done three hundred miles in six days, and I had made my sketches as well in this time.

I do not know whether it was because the Turkish army was in want of horses and cattle, whether it was to exhibit their daring and pluck to the enemy, or whether from sheer devilry, but a number of Circassians, under the command of Fehmi Bey, made a predatory raid across the Danube from Necropolis to the Roumanian shore. They obtained boats in which they were packed pretty closely. At one time I had thought of accompanying them, but perhaps under the circumstances it was as well that I remained on this side, and in company with Fehmi and many others watched the doings of these daring men.

Through glasses and telescopes, we saw them reach the shore, and could see them disappear into a village, and after a remarkably short space of time saw them return, driving horses and cattle. They then fastened halters round the animals' necks and horns, and these they again tied to a hawser fixed to the stern of each boat. Then the rowers

started work while the others drove the animals into the water. There were four or five boats engaged in the work, and I should say nearly two hundred animals were attached to them, the rear being brought up by the remaining Circassians in a boat. It was their business to urge the beasts forward.

This must have been strenuous work for the men rowing, for at least half the animals died on the voyage across, some of them turning completely over. Nevertheless, when the boats arrived at our side of the Danube, every one seemed mightily pleased at the result of the daring exploit, for quite a hundred animals had been captured in this raid under the very noses of the Roumanian peasants.

On our return, at Roustchouk, we found that the bombardment had already commenced, and day after day it continued, while the Turks returned the compliment with very hard firing at the town of Giorgevo on the Roumanian side. The shells came over fast and furious, and as they were falling into the hotel garden we thought it advisable to clear out for a little while.

Coningsby and myself took a carriage with three horses, and drove up a steep hill to a Turkish battery that was heavily engaged, and I thought I would be able to sketch what was going on in perfect safety.

Seated on a bank, just outside the fort, we could see the twelve-inch shells leave the Russian mortars, and could hear them as they came screeching along.

I used to compare them to a child screaming in a house in an attic; the sound comes down the staircase towards you, until, with a final screech, it reaches the room where you are sitting. One of these particularly ugly customers was evidently badly aimed, and instead of going for the fort it made straight for us. At one moment it looked as though it would fall with an awful smash just as we threw ourselves back on the ground, and thus escaped injury.

As the bombardment for the day seemed to have slackened (in fact we thought it had stopped), we started to return to the hotel. As we were about to cross a bridge over a moat at one of the entrance gates to the town, a shell came screeching over, passed through the bridge just in front of our horses and burst underneath, where, unfortunately, a number of Turkish women and children had collected. Many were

killed and wounded. Our driver thereupon skirted round the hole in the bridge and went straight on into the town, whence we sent out surgeons to look after the wounded.

The next day the bombardment continued, and the people by this time had realised that it was impossible to remain in the town, and a general exodus started. As I stood in the streets watching them rushing out of the town, I could not but be amused at the extraordinary things they tried to save from their houses.

A woman clutching a baby in her arms, dashed out with a water-jug in her hand, while her son carried a mat and a brass bowl; an Armenian Jew saved a clock. It really was an awful sight; but so bombardments have always been, the civil population ever having to be sacrificed to the military exigencies of the situation.

At the eastern end of the main street was one of the entrance gates to the town. It was a wide, fortified gate, over which there was a four and a half ton gun, which was every now and then firing one of its shells into Georgevo, principally directed, I thought, against the cathedral.

One morning we were going out to watch the heavy firing from the outskirts, and I had just passed through the gate with several correspondents following, when this gun was fired. The concussion of the air was so great that it sent the fez that I was wearing flying in one direction, and myself sprawling in another. My friends ran forward to pick me up, and seeing blood on the ground thought I was killed, but found on examination that I was only stunned by the shock. My head had come suddenly and sharply into contact with the hard surface of the ground, much to the detriment of my nose.

After a good wash and brush down (why do people always say "brush up"?) I felt better, particularly after my friends had administered what they were polite enough to call "kid reviver," but which smelt very strongly, and tasted of whisky. After that I went on with my work.

Towards evening we were returning to our hotel in the town, when, on passing the French Consul's, we heard a tremendous crash, and some one rushed out to say that a shell had burst in the drawing-room.

We immediately ran into the house, and on arriving in the

room I must say it presented a startling spectacle. Chairs and sofas, torn and twisted, were lying in all directions, the mantel-piece was dislodged, and, curiously enough, every one of the pictures left hanging were twisted round with their faces to the wall.

In the centre of the room was a table with a large globe of gold and silver fish, and leaning gently against it was a great piece of shell weighing at least two pounds. Evidently, on bursting, this piece had flown all round the room, ricocheting from one side to another, and, its momentum ceasing when it reached the table, it had rolled over and leant gently up against this globe. I mention this simply to show what curious freaks occur under such circumstances. By the way, we discovered a heavy shell, which had not exploded, stuck in the cornice.

About this time the British Consul informed us that he had been asked by the Commander-in-Chief to request us all to go to Schumla, and as this was a military order we had to obey. Coningsby and I travelled there together, and, in company with Wentworth and another, we took a house, and ran our own mess, as did most of the other men, instead of going to the miserable, dirty hotel.

For some considerable time we were compelled to remain in Schumla, and, as a little variation from the ordinary routine of work, we got up what we called the "Correspondents' Race Meeting," to which we invited the Turkish Commander-in-Chief and his Staff.

I had been fortunate enough to purchase an exceedingly fine Arab, and I entered the lists for the flat race, which I only lost by less than a length, and so mad was I at not winning that the next day I challenged the winner, and on this occasion actually beat him by two lengths.

We had all kinds of races, and even managed a steeplechase, with improvised hedges. As a meeting of that kind was of no use without a refreshment tent we had arranged for that also. Many of the Turkish officers took good advantage of this, and we all found that their devotion to coffee only was a myth, for the champagne, to say nothing of the whisky, disappeared readily.

On our journey through the country Coningsby and myself, passing through Bulgarian villages, had seen, not only evidences

of the Turkish atrocities, but, on many occasions, had actually seen them take place, and yet we dared not interfere.

I had seen Circassians attacking a convoy of fugitive women and children, whom they robbed, and, in some instances, murdered. I saw women with half a dozen sword-thrusts, children prodded with bayonets, and more than once I have seen Bulgarians chased by young Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, stabbed and killed before my eyes, yet I was powerless to render them any protection.

I had taken notes of these things, intending to make sketches, and forward them to England, for I felt it to be a disgrace that these ruffians should be allowed to go about this disturbed country at their own free will, committing what atrocities they liked unchecked. On second thoughts, however, I thought it wise, while I was acting for my office as an artist, to chronicle only the events of the war, and, if I wished to remain in the country, I had best leave such matters alone and Coningsby agreed on this matter also.

One morning I received a telegram from my office: "Where are you? No sketches received for six weeks."

"Oh!" said I, as I put on my thinking cap. "No sketches for six weeks! What does it mean?"

Tewfik Bey and Selim Effendi, the Press censors, had been playing tricks on me. They had not forwarded the sketches, which I sent them by Circassian runners week by week. I said to myself, "I must see this out," and, going to my room, I sat down and made six sketches of the brutalities we had witnessed on the road.

Then, folding them up in the ordinary way, and enclosing them in my red office envelope, I went across to the Press censors.

"Good morning, gentlemen," I said.

"Good morning, Mr. Prior," they replied.

"I have come to bring you some sketches to be stamped for the post."

"Take a seat."

Taking the sketches out of the red envelope, Tewfik Bey examined one. Pushing it from him, he looked at me aghast, saying, "I cannot stamp this; it is not true."

"Never mind; look at the next."

"This is worse. I will not stamp it either."

I said, as calmly as possible, "Look at them all."

When he had gone through the whole six he looked at me angrily (as also did Selim Effendi), saying, "We shall not stamp any of them. They are false, they are lies; we shall destroy them."

I said, "Don't destroy them, because it will waste my time, for if you do I shall have to make them again and ten times worse."

Then approaching the table, I smashed my hand down on it as I looked straight in their faces, saying, "Tewfik Bey and Selim Effendi, you have stopped my sketches for six weeks. What have you done with them?"

They denied it. Again clenching my hand and bringing it down with another thump on the table, I said, "You have. What does this telegram mean?"

I showed them the one I had just received from my office.

They pretended it was perfectly incorrect, but I could see from their sullen faces that they were guilty but did not know how to get out of it.

"Now," I said, "Tewfik Bey, there are the sketches, and you will stamp them, but I will give you my word as an Englishman that I will not post them, but if ever one more week's sketches of mine fail in the post I will send them to England."

He said he would not stamp them.

"Very well, then," I said, "I will take them to Varna."

He replied, "If you do I will have you arrested."

"Oh no, you won't; you cannot frighten me like that. If you arrest me, the question would come up as to what I was arrested for? My reply would be that I had seen atrocities, and was going to expose them, and thus the whole affair would become an international matter. I may be deported and sent back to my country, but, as I have told you, I will make these sketches ten times worse, and twenty of them instead of six. Now, then, Tewfik Bey, will you stamp those sketches or will you not?"

They both looked at me and saw that the game was up, and in the end stamped them, enclosing them in the red envelope, which was sealed, they having my promise as an Englishman that they should only be posted in the event of my sketches being stopped again by them.

I had won, hands down.

With such a very large tract of country as that in which the war was being carried on, I was obliged to make many journeys from Roustchouk to Schumla and back again, and this had to be done by road as the railway did not work.

On one of these journeys, when Mr. Coningsby, of the *Times*, was with me, we came to the conclusion that we were being led by our guides in a different direction from that in which we had travelled before.

We were going through a deep wood, which I certainly did not remember, and even while remarking this to Coningsby my servant Yanco drew his horse up by my side and said, "About eight Circassians have come up and joined our two men, sir, and I have overheard their conversation; they have suggested robbing your cart, and if they begin that, sir, they will not stop at murder."

It suddenly flashed on me that that was the object of our being led into this wood.

Still riding on, I said to Coningsby, "What would you suggest we do? This is rather a serious matter."

We had a Bashi-Bazouk (an armed villager) and a Zaptieh who were acting as guides, and we were at that moment in this sort of position: the Bashi-Bazouk was riding just in front of me with his rifle across his saddle, and in front of Coningsby was the Zaptieh riding in a similar manner, while just behind us were our servants.

My cart, as well as Coningsby's, was about five hundred yards behind in charge of my two Circassians, who apparently had been influenced by their eight comrades.

I then made a suggestion to Coningsby with which he agreed, and calling up one of the Circassians, "Mehemet," I said to him, "I hear that there is a village about four miles in front of me, and as it is getting dark I am going to ride on fast, and you must bring the carts as quickly as you can." I noticed a curious look on his face as he turned to go back to the cart, and I then said to Yanco, "Now tell the Zaptieh and the Bashi-Bazouk to ride on quickly," at the same time I bundled my horse into that of the Bashi-Bazouk and struck at the horse to urge him on. We started very quietly, and when we got to a slight bend in the road I said, "Now, then, gallop as fast as we can go." I told Yanco to inform the men in front of Coningsby and myself that we were going to ride

exactly as we were, and if either of them moved the position of his rifle they would be dead men."

Coningsby drew his revolver, and I did the same; and when these men turned round and saw we both had our revolvers in our hands, they rode hard.

With not a small amount of excitement we arrived safely in the village, which was a considerable one, for it had a governor, who, on seeing us, came forward. I explained to him that we had ridden quickly and had left our carts on the road, and should be glad if he could send out and have them brought safely in.

He very kindly sent out four mounted cavalry, and our carts were brought in in perfect safety.

After a while my two men, Isaac and Mehemet, owned that it was a plot of the eight Circassians and the Bashi-Bazouk to murder us and rob us, and it was only by our decided action that they had been frightened and kept from doing so.

These Bashi-Bazouks were a perfect nuisance when travelling through the country.

The bombardment of Roustchouk went on for many months, but there was a certain time when we correspondents noticed a sulkiness towards us on the part of the Turkish inhabitants, whether caused by outside influence or the fact that those shells were being thrown across the Danube by Christians, killing and maiming the true followers of Mohammed, it is difficult to say; but there were times when we did not feel over safe in the place, although the British Consul, Mr. Reade, was living in the town. Shells had been bursting at the hospital and in the hotel garden, and causing immense suffering all round.

One morning we found the British flag had been hauled down and the American one substituted. At this we were mightily astonished, and at an indignation meeting it was decided that a deputation should call on the Consul and ask for an explanation.

For some reason or other I was appointed spokesman, and on being shown into Mr. Reade's study I told him the object of our visit, and that as Englishmen in the town we expected to see the English flag flying at the British Consulate, to which he replied that that was his business and not ours,

and that he represented America also, and he should fly which flag he pleased.

A shell had fallen in his garden, and that was why he had hauled down our flag. Indignant to a degree, I then informed him that if he did not pull down the American and put up the British flag I would cut it down myself, at which he was furious.

Wishing him good morning, we retraced our steps to the hotel, then jumping over the wall into the Consulate garden, I carried out my threat and soon cut the lanyard, and down came the flag, rope and all.

I then sent a telegram to Sir Henry Layard, Ambassador at Constantinople, detailing the circumstances, and asking if we had a Consul in Roustchouk, as the American flag was flying at the British Consulate, to which we received a reply: "The British flag ought to be flying at the British Consulate; have telegraphed Mr. Reade to that effect."

The fat was now in the fire, but early next morning we saw a boy clambering up the pole to pass a new lanyard through the eye of the block, and shortly after the British flag was flying once again.

The position at the British Consulate became so hot that the French representative persuaded Mr. Reade to leave his house and go and stay with him; and fortunate it was he did so, for almost as Mr. Reade left his study a heavy Russian shell came whizzing over and burst, wrecking the room completely.

There is little doubt that the Russians were directing some of their fire, apparently of set purpose, against the house of Mr. Reade, as also against the Konak, or Government House, which was then used as a military hospital. The fact was not denied, and I believe the Russian Government was asked to give some explanation or make some apology for the gratuitous insult to the British flag, to say nothing of the offence to humanity in such treatment of a building devoted to the sick and wounded.

It so happened that later on during the war I was taken very ill with dysentery, and while I remained up country I could not get rid of it, so as there was a temporary lull in the military operations I determined I would go to Constantinople to recover.

Having recovered from my illness, I once more set sail for

Varna and returned to the front. I should remark that, having presented my letters of introduction to His Excellency Nedjib Pasha, whom I found to be one of the most charming Turkish gentlemen I met during the whole campaign, I was made most welcome, and was invited to pitch my tent close handy to his own. I soon discovered that Nedjib spoke very good French and German, and a very little English; and I believe one of the reasons I got along so well with him, and made such a friendship with him, was the fact that I always spoke in English and insisted on his replying to me in the same way.

I had been with Nedjib Pasha for two or three weeks without the slightest incident to break the usual monotony of camp life. But on August 29, 1877, as the sun was setting, His Excellency called on me at my tent, and in the conversation told me that he intended to attack the Russians next day, as all the Generals were agreed to take the offensive at once. This was grand news. No sooner had he left me than I made preparations for some days' hard work. Next morning at day-break we heard the bugles sounding "To arms," or "Fall in"; and then the real bustle commenced. Opposite my tent were some guns; soon came the artillery horses, with their riders fully equipped, and, in a shorter time than it takes me to write it, they had been hooked up and were off. After giving directions to the driver of my baggage-cart to follow that of the General wherever it went, I called for my horses, and soon started off to the camp gates to see the troops march out. Those who have never seen any Turkish troops going to battle can scarcely imagine what they are like. In the faces and bearing of these men as they went past, headed by their officers, you might see daring, endurance, boldness, determination, and every quality that a soldier should have who is going out to face a formidable enemy. Their attire was peculiar in some respects. The Turkish soldiers are not booted after the European fashion; they have a queer kind of sandal, which is laced over the foot and up the legs. These brave fellows, too, wore ill-shaped jackets and baggy trousers, which had undergone so much rough wear and exposure to the sun and contact with the earth, that you could hardly find two garments of the same colour. But who cared? They were going to fight for their country; and fight they did.

Nedjib Pasha had headed his troops, and gone on to examine the ground. I had lost sight of him, as I remained behind with the troops; but when nearly all had passed, I put spurs to my horse, and, followed by my dragoman and Circassians, rode on up hill and down, through fields of maize, or Indian corn, and over ploughed fields about four miles, and came up with His Excellency on the top of a hill, surrounded by regular cavalry and irregulars, Circassians, Bashi-Bazouks, and the rest all ready and waiting his orders to go out and come to grips with the enemy.

He was looking over a most lovely tract of ground, the yellow corn showing a beautiful contrast to the green woods, in which it was known the Russians were hidden. After welcoming me and inviting me to come to his side, the Pasha ordered off some regular cavalry to his left, and the Circassians were then told off to the right, both to advance until they discovered the foe.

Some moments of anxiety were passed, until suddenly a Staff officer came up, saying he had seen the white dresses of those we were searching for. On satisfying himself that this was the case, Nedjib Pasha ordered up a gun, which, after its being unlimbered, he himself sighted, with the aid of my famous Stewart telescope. We held our breath for the first shot in the battle. At last the word was given. "Atesh ver!" (Give fire!), and with a boom and a hiss away went the messenger of death. "It has fallen short!" was the universal exclamation. "Load again!" Then "Atesh ver!" and away went another shell; this one with better effect. It fell right in amongst the body of cavalry, those who were able, scattering in all directions.

All this time the Turkish infantry had been steadily advancing under cover of the tall maize in the fields. We approached a village, behind which some masked batteries now opened fire upon us. This was eagerly answered by the troops of Achmed Eyoub, who had been coming up on our right. We could see his cavalry on our right, advancing at a gallop. What are they doing? Surely not trying to take the battery? Yes, they have tried it, but they are beaten back. The Turkish infantry next advance, pouring in a deadly shower of bullets. They come steadily over the hill, other troops following behind.

The roar of the enemy's cannon still continues, and smoke rises on every side. The battle has fairly begun. Achmed Eyoub's troops are eager to take their revenge upon the Russians for setting fire to the village lying in the hollow between the combatants. An hour has passed; the foremost troops move down into the valley and we lose sight of them. At last an aide-de-camp rides up breathless, to say the Russians have begun to retreat. At the same time we see another grand charge of cavalry on the cannon. The enemy's cavalry come out suddenly to meet it; they both halt, turn, and gallop off; then again the order is given to charge, and they meet with such ferocity that the two lines go completely through each other. The Russians must have suffered severely, for they rush off in rear of their cannon, which have by this time limbered up and galloped away. Another aide-de-camp rides up to say we have taken the village. More troops are moved forward; the enemy's cannon-fire is but slow. Achmed Eyoub still advances on the enemy, who are contesting the ground foot by foot; but he forces them back.

Nedjib Pasha, seeing how the day is going, wishes also to advance. So we all ride forward; and as we go through the village, so lately in the hands of the Russians, I cannot help feeling pity for the poor fellows who are suffering so awfully in all directions. The wounded are wriggling even over the bodies of the dead, so tenacious was the fight in the streets. Nedjib Pasha speaks to many, telling them that the ambulance wagons are following, and they will soon be relieved. One man comes by alone, with his right hand smashed to pieces; and waving it about he tells the General not to mind him. "It is only a hand," and what does he care for that, when it has killed four Russians? "Allah, Allah be with you!" is the delirious man's blessing as he passes his chief.

We mount another hill, upon which the enemy's fire is still very heavy, and the shells are falling fast and furious—so much so, that the General, turning round, advises me not to follow him. But I thought an Englishman, though merely a Special Artist, was not going to give in like that, and where my General could go, so would I. So up the hill we went together.

I found it certainly a warmer place than was pleasant. As we were just moving off, a shell fell amongst us, and at the

same moment a charge of powder burst, just as it was being placed in the gun, tearing the clothes and flesh off the gunners. It was horrible to see the plight of these men wriggling, blackened and burnt, and yet so far from any assistance. I have often thought, when going over a battlefield, that it is well with the dead, but for the poor wounded, lying there with, in some cases a sorry chance of help reaching them for hours, perhaps never at all, it is different. The sight of these mangled soldiers, groaning in their agony, and pitifully crying for water, is too awful even for the hardened correspondent to witness unmoved.

We rode through another field of Indian corn, and suddenly came in sight of another beautiful valley, with the village of Kizila lying at the farther end, at the base of a ridge of hills. Here the fight was most furious, for the Russians had long lines of entrenchments. Our soldiers were steadily firing and advancing; but all at once a dash forward was made, and so fierce did it appear that we held our breath. No one spoke. The Turks were actually storming the trenches. After a terribly bloody conflict they drove the Russians out at the point of the bayonet.

When I arrived at these trenches to sketch, I found them full of dead and dying. Russians and Turks intermingled, lying on top of each other several deep—a struggling mass, like eels in a bucket—hands and legs sticking up still moving, yet without the slightest chance of the living being hauled out from the dead; there they would remain until time should put an end to their agonies.

The Russians then retreated to a Bulgarian churchyard in a forest. Here the same style of fighting went on. The Turks began with firing on their knees, and at last, with a roar and a yell, rushed up; but this time the Russian fire was so deadly that they had to retreat. Again they advanced, and again they were repulsed; but the third charge was too determined to be resisted. The Russians had to give way, leaving knapsack and arms in the hands of the victors.

While this had been going on, other troops were storming the village. Our cavalry in this case were of immense service, as they drove the Russians up and down the streets; but the Russians took to the houses, and our infantry had to come up and clear them out. In Bulgarian villages the entrance doors

are placed almost at right angles to the streets, so that the enemy had only to put up large stones, or clumps, and roots of trees against them to form capital barricades. As these commanded the whole street, the difficulty of taking the place was very great; but the previous successes had lent extra energy and courage to the Turkish troops, and on they rushed in the face of an awful fire, until this village was taken with as great a success as had followed the attack on trenches and graveyard.

All this time our artillery had been pounding away at each of the enemy's positions. It was now growing late in the afternoon, and the fight had lasted seven or eight hours. Nedjib Pasha was anxious to put an end to it for the day, but the soldiers would not stop. They still pressed on, and now a very difficult bit of forest and another churchyard had to be taken. An officer galloped up to say their commander had no ammunition, and wanted more troops. These were instantly despatched; the men darted off at the double, and the ammunition followed. As soon as these fresh troops arrived, they poured in such a fire that the enemy at once gave way, and rushed through the village of Karabounar down into the valley. The next thing we heard was that we had taken the Russian commander's headquarters, with all its effects, tents and baggage, even the officers' coats, which were still hanging on the tent-pegs. This was a grand time for the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, who rushed in and looted everywhere; so that half an hour later, when I went in with the General, every article had disappeared.

The end of a grand victory had arrived, and I began to think of my sleeping-quarters. But the several Generals had to meet and discuss their new positions, so that it was ten o'clock at night before we left the battlefield.

So dark was it that when the different Generals started to join their respective corps I was a little puzzled as to which was Nedjib Pasha. Seeing an officer by my side, I pointed to a General and his Staff going in one direction, and I said, "Is that Nedjib?" and he distinctly assured me that it was; and I hurried after him, keeping at a certain distance, until we arrived near his camp, when, on approaching nearer, I discovered that, instead of it being my good friend, it was no less a personage than Achmed Eyoub Pasha, a General

who had a great dislike for Europeans in general and Englishmen in particular.

I could not help feeling pretty miserable, for it was raining; it was dark, and I had nowhere to sleep, and I was hungry.

The battle had been so fierce, and we had travelled so fast over nine miles of country, in which we had pushed the enemy back, that the commissariat arrangements were thoroughly disorganised, and I had lost my cart, my servants, and Circassians, and I was absolutely alone with my horse.

At last I saw Eyoub Pasha sit down on a bundle of straw leaning against more bundles, some of his Staff following his example in a semicircular formation, and a huge fire was burning in front of them. Puzzled as to what was best to do, I stood under a tree, thinking out the situation, and said to myself: "There is no help for it; I must bivouac for the night where I am."

I tethered my horse to the tree, hungry and thirsty like myself, poor beggar, then with my waterproof hood pulled over my hat I squatted on the ground.

It so happened that Eyoub had spotted me, and an officer approaching, requested me to go over to the General. As I drew near I salaamed to him, and he returned the salutation, and, pointing to a bundle of straw by his side, made a sign for me to be seated. This was slightly different from what I had expected; and then taking a cigarette case out of his pocket, he offered me one, and in another moment I saw some beautiful Turkish coffee placed before me.

It was quite evident that the General was as hard up for food as I was, for he certainly did not offer me any; but one of his Staff took out of his haversack a biscuit—one of those magnificent Turkish commissariat biscuits, which are certainly the finest I have ever eaten when campaigning—and offered it to me.

Whilst seated here watching the fire flickering, I saw a Turkish soldier approach the General, with his rifle on his shoulder, and something fixed on his bayonet that looked like a cabbage. Halting in an excited way in front of him, he cast the lump from his bayonet on the ground, and to the General's and my horror, we saw it was a human head—a Russian's. I was told afterwards that the man was delirious with the excitement of the fighting, and that he had cut off the

Russian's head, and then brought it to Eyoub as a claim to a medal.

Eyoub flung out his hand in a most indignant manner, and in a gruff voice ordered him away. But the Turkish soldier, in an indifferent manner, brought his rifle round, and sticking the bayonet into the head again as it lay on the ground, marched off triumphantly with the trophy over his shoulder.

I hope the reader will understand that this was not a common occurrence, for although I was travelling with the Turks for over a year it was the first and only occasion that I had seen such a thing done.

There was no one who could speak to me, for neither the General nor any one of his Staff understood any language but Turkish. Suddenly, however, an inspiration came to him, and speaking to one of his officers, he departed and soon returned with an old Turkish soldier, who I found spoke very fair English. He then informed me that the General was sorry that he could not offer me more hospitality, but he had no tents, and his commissariat had all gone wrong, but he hoped that I would take some bundles of straw, and make myself as comfortable as I possibly could, near to him. When I remembered the reputation this man had for hatred to Christians, I must say that I thanked him doubly for his hospitality and kindness to me that night.

My horse was fed, and so tired was I with the day's work that, despite the rain, I sat and crouched and fell fast asleep. Not for long, however, for before daybreak I found the General on the move, and, saddling my horse as quickly as possible, I followed him. He was going to examine his position, and, to my astonishment, I found that his army, having fought all day and bivouacked without any food, had actually entrenched the whole of their positions during the night.

The army under the command of Nedjib Pasha was encamped waiting for further instructions from Constantinople. Close to the camp was a Bulgarian village, and my colleagues of the Press, among them Coningsby of the *Times*, Drew Gay of the *Daily Telegraph*, and many others, very soon came to the conclusion that a room in a house was far superior to a tent, more particularly as rain was pouring most of the time. So all of us proceeded to the village with our horses, carts, and baggage, and very soon found most comfortable

quarters. The house-owner, with whom I made arrangements, was a Bulgarian and anything but prepossessing to look at. But all I cared about was shelter. The man gave me a stable for my horses and a very large room for me to work and sleep in. I set my camp bed up in a corner away from the door, and made myself as comfortable as possible. Coningsby and Drew Gay were in a house close by. Sometimes they called on me, and sometimes I went across to them for a chat. Our commissariat was not at all bad, as we could buy chicken and geese for a few piastres—one piastre being worth about twopence halfpenny—and my host used to supply me with potatoes, eggs, and milk.

There were always great numbers of Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians prowling about and in rear of the army—but for what object, except to strip and rob the dead, I failed to discover, seeing some of these worthless ruffians might have been set to work to make trenches or carry away the wounded; but they were not engaged for this kind of work, and nothing would persuade them to do anything so unprofitable. The real cause of their presence seemed that when the regulars had cleared the road for them they might descend on the villagers and the wounded and indulge their ferocious and brutal natures in loot, blood, fire, and lust.

It is quite true that many Bulgarians were guilty of robberies, and murders, and other outrages, which almost equal the outrages of the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians on the Christian part of the population.

Nothing delighted these ruffians more than clothing themselves in the Russian uniforms which they stole from the dead bodies on the field; and they often did look a funny crowd, particularly when mounted on enormous Russian horses, which they had also stolen. I was staying in a hovel of an hotel once when a number of these men tried to force their way in, but the proprietor, as big a ruffian as themselves, put chains across the entrance gateway to prevent their entering, and after much argument they were induced to retire.

I quote from my Diary:—

“On September 14th we had another very strongly contested battle, in which the Turks were again completely victorious. The Russians commenced the attack with very

heavy cannonading, and pushed forward their infantry to take the village of Sinankeui, which was then in our hands. For several hours it was difficult to tell how it was going, but just before sundown the 'Allah! Allah!' from our troops proved that we had been successful, and that the Russians had been forced to retire with very heavy losses.

"I am writing this, and drawing on the field of battle, with a naked candle between my feet, which acts as a candlestick. I am surrounded by the dead, and the groans of the wounded are most painful to hear. The English doctors, as in my sketch, are very hard at it, and have been for some hours—Doctors Wattie, Busby, Lake, and Boyd are indefatigable in their labours, and astonish all around with the indefatigable way in which they go through their horrible and ghastly work."

At the commencement of the battle I left my horse with my Circassians, and went down the slope of the hill, intending to make a sketch of the position from the advanced trench (there were three lines of trenches, one behind the other), when suddenly some Russian skirmishers, who had crept round the side of the hill, opened fire.

The enemy, under the impression that we were a weak force and knowing our retreat was almost cut off, advanced steadily up a gorge in the middle of the valley. Their artillery, planted on three different mountains, began pounding away to cover their advance, and draw off our attention if possible. They succeeded in crowding out of the gorge up into the valley, and then began swarming up the mountains on each side, and as they had fifteen battalions engaged, and we had only four battalions, I think it must be allowed that the Turks made a brave and fine fight of it.

I certainly believe it was a surprise to the Turks, and that they had not expected the attack in that part of the field so early. However, they very soon replied to the challenge, and in a short time it developed into a sharp engagement—in fact, I have always called it the hottest corner I had been in during that war. More Russians kept coming on, and in the end it proved the most severe action of the day. I unfortunately could not retire upon the slope or leave the trench, and I simply had to remain under the tremendous fire which the Russians brought to bear upon us, without any chance of

escape; and had not the Turks been successful in resisting this sudden and unexpected attack of the enemy, and pushed them back, I should have had to accept the fate of the soldier who is caught in a trap. At the first opportunity that occurred it did not take me very long to clear out of that trench to join my men with the horses.

I then went over with my servant and Circassians, through a thick forest, to a battery of six guns, which was pounding away as fast as it could with wonderful effect, though the enemy were replying with eighteen guns.

As I rode across a ploughed field the Russian shells came whizzing over and around so thick that I was almost inclined to retreat, but I put spurs to my horse and galloped on. These particular shells were all clearing and missing our battery, and only came hissing and crashing some hundred or two hundred yards to the rear. At last it became so terribly hot that I beat a side retreat. As I did so I chanced to look round, then observed two of our cavalry galloping up, no doubt with orders for the officer in charge of the guns. At the same moment I heard the screech of a shell and then saw it burst right under them, killing both horses and men, and scattering them in all directions. It was a horrible sight, and, remembering I had only just passed over the same ground, just a little unpleasant. Continuing my course, however, I at last gained the battery, and having made the sketch I wanted I made for the village, which extended down a ridge with hills spreading out each side, and it was along the crest of the right-hand hills that I had to travel in order to gain a safe place for watching the fight. I found, however, that I was as badly off as ever, for the "Ping, ping, ping" of the Russian bullets, as they flew in all directions, was most demoralising. Again we advanced, then quickly through a forest, and suddenly the whole village opened before our eyes, and I found Dr. Wattie busy at the wounded, every now and then looking round to see how the fight was going on.

The Russians poured up the valley, and even advanced so close to us that we had to take counsel how we could save our Arabs in case of being forced back; but the Turkish troops met them with a fire so fearful and deadly, and with such determination, that it was quite clear we might remain for the time being. Each time the enemy sent in fresh troops they

were received with an incessant volley so severe and crushing that an old campaigning Turkish officer beside me remarked that no troops could possibly live in such a storm of leaden hail; and so it turned out.

While talking to a colonel of a regiment which was being held in reserve, a messenger of death came up the hill and hit the officer in the leg, smashing the bone into splinters. Fortunately Wattie was close by, and soon attended to him.

The next morning I went over the battlefield, just in time to see the burial of the dead, which is generally a solemn proceeding, but is most affecting when you see fine fellows thrown into a gorge, or the dry bed of a mountain torrent, one on top of the other, and the embankment simply dragged down on them.

Having a desire, if possible, to see the Russian position of Biela, I rode on along a ridge running far into the valley of the White Lom, within eight hundred or nine hundred yards of the enemy's advanced posts, going right up to our skirmishing trenches.

The beauty of the valley dividing us from Biela now broke upon us. We clearly saw the Russians building gun pits and shelter trenches against our next attack, which I imagined was not far off.

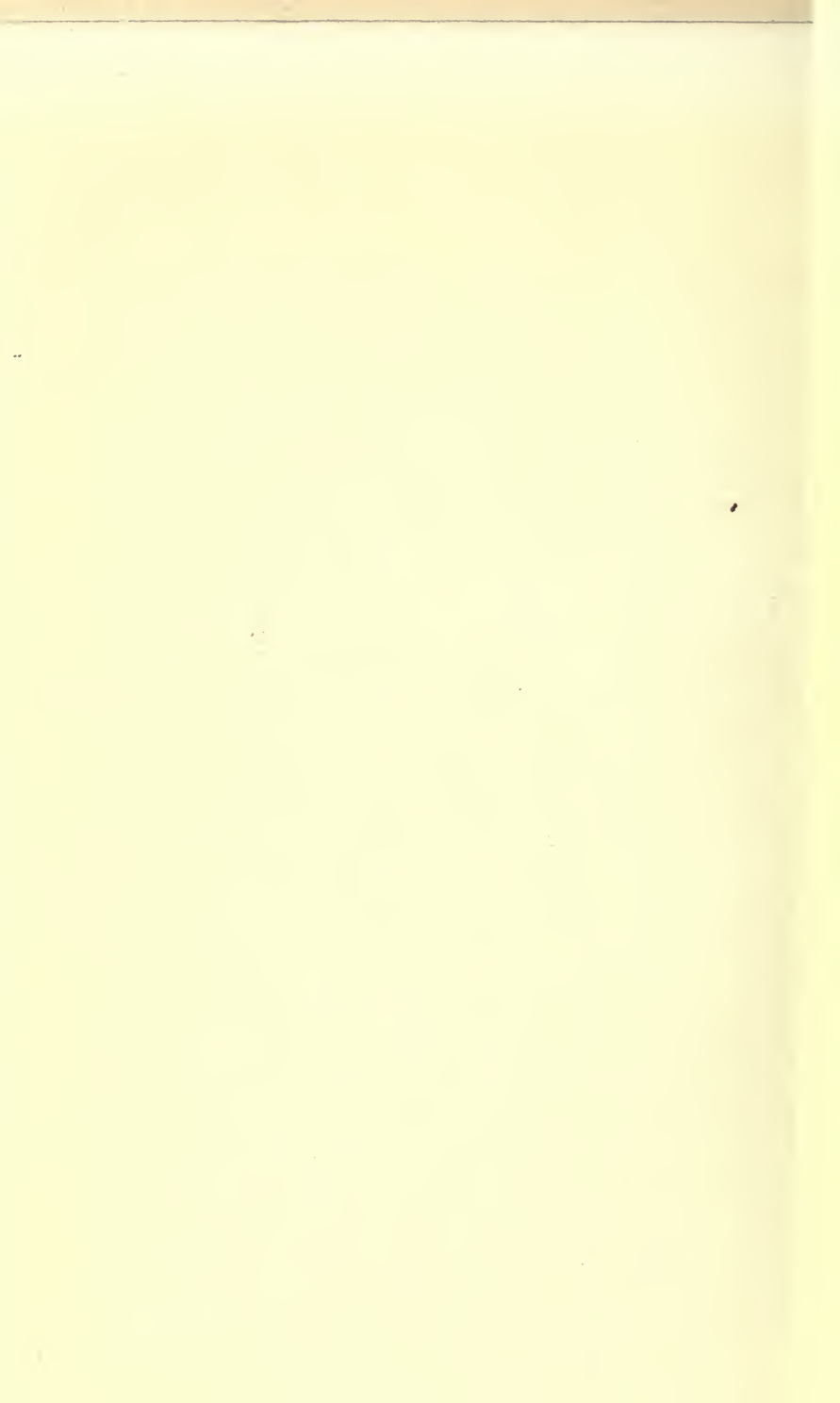
While standing on top of a parapet, making a note of all I could see, and occasionally looking through my telescope, a Russian sentry took a steady pot-shot at me, and I had the unpleasant satisfaction of hearing a bullet flatten itself against a stone at my feet. The stone was cracked, and the lump of lead went as flat as a penny.

I went on with my work, but almost instantly another puff of smoke and a sharp bang showed that a further attempt had been made to dislodge me. The aim was even better this time, for there was no doubt about the "ping" as the bullet whizzed by. The only thing to do was to get under shelter, which I very soon did.

As I was not at any time near the Shipka Pass, I am not able to give any incidents of what took place in that part of the country, but there is no doubt that an awful waste of life occurred there, caused solely by Suleiman Pasha's stubbornness and disobedience of orders from his superiors. He lost over 20,000 killed, and 22,000 wounded, and there



DOCTORS AT WORK ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE. SINANKEUI, SEPT. 14, 1877.



is very little doubt but that Suleiman, who was one of the Sultan's favourites, of whom I have heard many sinister remarks made, was one of the principal causes of our not having taken Biela, and thus forcing every Russian back, not only across the Danube, but into the river itself.

Mehemet Ali, when Commander-in-Chief, told me several times, with almost tears in his eyes, that he had ordered Suleiman twelve times to give up Shipka, and come and join him. "Let the Russians have Shipka," he said. "What harm could this do?" With Suleiman's extra army he would have taken Biela, the Russian base, and thus have forced Gourko to fall back from that difficult pass, instead of which he himself had to retreat, after pushing the enemy back over nine miles to within almost a rifle-shot of the great Russian base at Biela. It was said that Suleiman was jealous of Mehemet Ali, and was pulling the wire at Constantinople for the downfall of that fine General so as to supplant him, which eventually he was successful in doing. Suleiman in those days was called a traitor, and I see no reason even now to challenge that remark. When I remember that with Biela within our grasp after all the severe fighting, and the Russians demoralised, we were ordered from Constantinople to fall back on our original positions, I cannot help feeling that there was treachery somewhere, and that an awful loss of life at Shipka might have been spared and the troops used to better purpose. It was officially stated that "Mehemet Ali found the Russian position near Biela rather too formidable, and he retired upon the River Lom, for which act of discretion (please note the word 'discretion') he has been deprived of his Bulgarian command." This shows clearly how much Suleiman's army was wanted by the Commander-in-Chief, to assist him in the capture of the Russian base, and the consequent discomfiture and pushing back of the enemy, making possible the relief of Osman Pasha at Plevna. Another official note states that the Grand Duke Nicholas's headquarters were removed back to Sistova, thus showing the fear that Biela would fall into our hands.

It is certainly more than probable that these remarks will not please many readers, but I am only giving the opinions of those days and the sentiments expressed. Is there any question that on every occasion when the two forces met the

Turks were victorious, with the one exception of Plevna, and that grand General Osman Pasha was only beaten there at the last by the sudden arrival of the Roumanian army?

During a battle despatches from different parts of the field are constantly arriving; but on one occasion, of which I made a sketch, an officer came galloping up, and in great haste handed to General Nedjib a note, and I could not help observing how his face changed as he read it. I had noticed that for some time he had been slightly dejected, but on receiving this despatch his face brightened, and turning round to his Staff, he gave instructions in all directions. I did not hear details, but was told it was in connection with the Russians' fast retreat, and that we might possibly take Biela before the day was out.

Unfortunately this was not to be, for later on another despatch arrived with instructions that we were to fall back upon our original positions, as stated above.

Later on the meeting of Nedjib and Eyoub Pasha took place, and they shook hands most heartily over the success of the day's fighting, no doubt expressing in language that I could not understand their disgust at the orders they had received to retreat.

We captured many prisoners, one being an officer who was subjected to a very severe examination.

I was close to Nedjib, who was seated on the ground, when the Russian was brought up and ordered to kneel down; but unfortunately there was no one who could speak Russian. My man Yanco, however, being a Pole, understood the language thoroughly, and he acted as interpreter, and I guaranteed that he would translate faithfully everything that the prisoner said.

Having gone through the trying ordeal of cross-examination as to the number and position of the enemy, and having answered a hundred and one questions, Nedjib Pasha ordered him to be sent down to our base in charge of two Zebeeks and Circassians.

When I heard that, I remonstrated.

"Oh no, General, don't send him down in charge of those men; he will never arrive alive."

Nedjib Pasha said, "Oh yes, they will take him down all right."

I said, "No, you won't send him that way."

He smiled and said, "Oh yes, it is all right."

Again I said, "No, you will not; and if you do, I will go with him."

This I was naturally saying in French. I was very friendly with Nédjib, and I said to him quietly, "You know well enough, if you send him down with those Zebeeks and Circassians, he will never reach the base alive."

I knew that these men, whose sole object was loot, would never be bothered guarding a miserable Russian prisoner for several days. They would simply murder him, rob him of his clothes, and come back and join the army. Nedjib then to oblige me ordered that two picked men from his regular cavalry should escort him to Schumla.

As they left I gave the Russian prisoner a note to a friend of mine at the base, asking him to keep it for me, and many months afterwards I saw that letter as a guarantee that that Russian arrived safely. I cannot help feeling even to this day that I saved the man's life.

After the momentous fight of Kaceljevo the English doctors had such an enormous number of wounded to attend to that it kept them hard at work all through the night.

I was frightfully done up with the toil of the day, but I attended to the pitching of their tents, as well as mine, close handy to where they were operating on the unfortunate Turks, and as they could not devote a single moment to eating, or even drinking, I set to work and prepared a big stew for them.

They were in the midst of over four hundred wounded men, and had succeeded in patching up about a hundred when I went over and insisted that they should come and eat something.

"I have prepared a grand stew for you, Wattie and Busby. Come along and have some, and then you can return to your ghastly work."

But even while speaking to them Wattie said, "Look here, Prior, how can I leave this man? Look at this officer, a bit of shell has caught him and torn his stomach open. He can't live, it's true, but I must do something."

Whilst watching him several soldiers clutched hold of me, thinking I was a surgeon, and pulled me towards another unfortunate officer who had got a bullet in his ankle.

I examined him and found that the bullet was still sticking

out, and, getting hold of a pair of Wattie's forceps, I succeeded in wriggling the bullet out, and then with plaster and a bandage bound him up. I fear it was a very crude operation.

At last I did succeed in getting them to the tent, and when they sat down in front of the stewpot they were something too dreadful to look at; their hands and arms covered with coagulated blood, they did not even take the time to wash their hands, but ate and drank just as they were, and then jumped up and rushed back to their rough operating tables; and these brave surgeons worked throughout the night, while I sat on the ground engaged upon my sketches, every now and then paying them a visit as an interesting case would present itself.

The poor fellows under operation were very brave, but it was impossible for them to resist groaning, and these horrible sounds sang in my ears as I stood watching the English surgeons at work. Suddenly Dr. Boyd called out, "Look here, Prior, here is a funny hit. A bullet went in at this man's mouth and, travelling right down his vertebra, came out at his back." No sooner had I examined this than Busby called out to me also, "Look here, this man during the fight had evidently turned round for some purpose, and a bullet caught him in the back, travelled right up, and came out of his mouth, smashing his jaw."

Two men with wounds exactly the reverse of each other I thought very curious and made a note of it. Some months afterwards, when visiting the hospital at Roustchouk, Dr. Stevens, who was in charge, was talking about the wonderful way in which the wounded Turks recovered. "I've a man here," he said, "who six weeks ago had a bullet travel up his back and smash his mouth to pieces, and yet there he is now eating a mutton chop."

By Jove! I recognised the fellow; it was the one I saw Busby patching up in the field, and he was actually able to eat and talk.

During the cold weather, and after many months spent with rain pouring down, when even we could scarcely keep ourselves dry, the poorly clothed, poorly sheltered, and poorly fed troops, soaked to the skin, trembling from head to foot with ague and fever, would turn up in hundreds outside the English hospital tent begging for treatment and medicine. It was, of course, impossible to diagnose each case, and so Busby in his quiet

way made up huge quantities of quinine mixture, of which he gave every man in turn a dose. They made horribly wry faces when taking it, but went away apparently quite satisfied. It was, no doubt, the best and only thing that could be done under the circumstances.

CHAPTER IV

THE KAFFIR WAR. 1878

THE troubles in Kaffraria in 1878 seem to have been the beginning of a series of little wars in South Africa.

The Kaffirs had risen under various chiefs—Kreli, Sandilli, and Tiny Macomo—and the 90th Regiment, under Colonel Palmer, was ordered out to assist in the suppression of the rebellious tribes.

I was fortunate enough to be permitted to journey out in the steamer with the troops. It was the Union Company's s.s. *Nubian*.

This regiment at home was anything but up to its proper strength, so men from various regiments had been drafted into it, and I was astonished to find what mere boys many of them were. It was actually acknowledged that some of them had never even fired a shot, but we know very well that things are altered now.

In those days British regiments had different facings, that is, different coloured collars and cuffs, besides regimental badges, and six tailors were occupied during the whole voyage out, altering these facings, and replacing them with the same colour as that of the 90th Regiment, in order that when the men landed they might not look such a mixed crowd as when they started.

Shortly after leaving England an incident occurred which was deeply regretted by every one in the regiment. A court martial was to be held on one of the non-commissioned officers, in consequence of a lamentable breach of discipline.

It appeared that just before embarking he had been induced by his relatives and friends to have a parting glass, and, as he was almost a teetotaler, it had such an effect on him that, unfortunately, he was incapable of doing his duty as the regiment went on board.

The sentence of the court was that he should be reduced to the ranks.

Never shall I forget the scene on the following morning.

On the quarter-deck the troops were drawn up on one side of the ship, and the wives of the non-commissioned officers, with their children, sat on benches on the other side. Colonel Palmer, surrounded by his officers, occupied a seat at a table near the binnacle. In severe tones the order was given for the prisoner to be brought up.

A few moments later he was to be seen coming from the forward part of the ship, between a guard with fixed bayonets. Standing bolt upright in front of the Colonel, he saluted. The sentence of the court was then read out to him, and immediately two men advanced and cut off his stripes. The man stood rigid, his eyes fixed straight in front of him, looking at the horizon.

While this was going on I was watching the women on the other side of the ship, and I saw his wife being supported, and kept from fainting, by two of her friends, while her children clung to her skirts in terror, for they could see what distress their mother was in without realising the cause.

The stripes having fallen to the ground, the order was given "Right about face—quick march," and the sergeant-major of the 90th Regiment, now reduced to the ranks, went forward under the same guard. At the moment his wife fell forward in a dead swoon.

The sequel of this story may be given here, instead of waiting for the section dealing with the Zulu War, to which it properly belongs.

There is no doubt that the fact of the man being incapable of doing his duty was very serious, and that something had to be done, but the question whether the sentence was excessive or not I must leave to Colonel Palmer, the court martial, and the public. The fact remains that the sentence was thought very severe by those able to judge, for the following year Colonel Wood, now Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, took over the command of the 90th Regiment from Colonel Palmer, and when I went out to the Zulu War and came up to the 90th Regiment, I had a conversation with him about this very incident.

He said, "Would you like to see the man, Mr. Prior?" I

said, "Yes, sir, I should very much," and soon he appeared, and stood before me wearing all his stripes again—sergeant-major of the 90th Light Infantry.

Grasping him by the hand, I congratulated him most heartily. He had worked his way up and been helped forward by Colonel Wood to the highest position a non-commissioned officer could hold in a British regiment.

But to return to the s.s. *Nubian*, whose engines were still monotonously pounding away, so that we should arrive at the appointed time—February 4th—at Cape Town, where Colonel Palmer would receive instructions as to the port on the East Coast at which he was to land his regiment. Soon after arrival at the capital of the Cape Colony I went ashore and called at Government House, to find that the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, was at East London. Lady Frere, who kindly expressed her pleasure at meeting me again, said she thought the 90th Regiment would be ordered there.

On the following day, while dining with a friend, I suddenly heard that the ship was to leave very early in the morning, so about 9 o'clock I made my way down to the pier, there to find a perfect hurricane blowing, the ship anchored about two miles out at sea, and the sand and dust almost blinding.

At last I succeeded in finding an old sailor, who with his mate agreed to try and get me on board. "It's blowing very hard, sir," he said, "and I shall want fifteen shillings." He had a splendid sea-going fishing-lugger, and having paid "ten bob" on account, I started; but what a time we had! I got under the forecastle for shelter, and watched the two men, who had hard work at the helm and jib. They managed splendidly, and to the astonishment of those watching on board, I jumped up on the accommodation ladder in the very nick of time. I found I had been given up, as it was such a nasty night, but there were still seven young officers who had not yet returned to the ship, and all eyes were straining to peer through the darkness, when suddenly we heard "Ship ahoy!" and found it proceeded from the lifeboat, which had come out, bringing the seven delinquents.

We got away at last, and in due time the troops were all landed, and bivouacked for the night at Panmure, as they were to march to King William's Town on the following morning.

The Colonel of the regiment and I dined together at a little hotel there, where we put up. I had a pint of claret, and he had some beer and later a brandy and soda. Before I had finished dinner a curious sensation came over me, and I went out on the veranda. I felt as though tipsy, and sneaked into the billiard-room to lie down on a sofa. Shortly afterwards a rare good fellow—a Mr. Baker—suggested that he should help me up to my room, which he did. In the morning I told the Colonel about it, when he looked at me with a smile and owned that *his* brandy and soda had had much the same effect on him. He had felt so tipsy he could not stand. We were told later that all the liquor at the hotel was absolutely dangerous, and nobody thought of drinking anything but soda-water, with perhaps a little Hollands gin, that being too cheap to be worth adulterating.

A frightful concoction was brewed out there, called "Cape Smoke." I have heard it called "fixed bayonets," "streaked lightning," and various other uncomplimentary titles, but whatever its name, it is a vile spirit.

During the following night I heard a tremendous commotion in the courtyard of the hotel, and saw two of the 90th Regiment lurching about and creating a disturbance. I shouted to them to clear out and return to camp, but they simply staggered into a corner, mad with the effects of the same stuff.

Before the regiment started in the morning, we buried one of these poor fellows and the other was taken to hospital. So much for "Cape Smoke."

Mr. Baker was head of the firm of Baker Bros., merchants and general store dealers, and lived in King William's Town. He had come down with his wife and children to see them off to Cape Town for the benefit of their health, the scarcity of water making the place very unhealthy, while fever was very prevalent.

"You will find the hotel very indifferent," he said one morning, "and I shall be very pleased if you will stay at my house during your visit to King William's Town."

This hospitality I readily accepted, and in conversation during the evenings I learned a good deal of the Kaffir manners and habits and how the war was proceeding.

A few days after my arrival, I obtained permission to join a party of volunteers, Colonists and Burghers, under a leader

named Rottenbach, who were going out on a few days' reconnoitring expedition in the Kaffir country.

Mr. Baker lent me a horse and saddle, on which I strapped my greatcoat and waterproof coat, with a pair of saddlebags containing just a flannel shirt, a tooth-brush, and a few other things. Then I started off, and I may safely say that in the whole course of my life this was the first and only time I ever travelled so lightly.

To be sure there was a wagon carrying bread, coffee, sugar, &c., to accompany our fifty volunteers. Any meat required was obtained by killing one of the captured oxen, from which each man cut, helping himself to the portion of the animal he liked best, while it was hot.

This was too much for me, and I could not do it; but one of the volunteers, a good-natured fellow, whom I afterwards induced to act as a kind of servant to me, cut up little pieces of this beef, fixed it on a skewer or bayonet, and brought it to me ready cooked.

This kind of thing was all very well for one day, but the few days turned out to be ten, and the bread, sugar, coffee, and tea gave out. The sleeping arrangements were also primitive. After the horses were hobbled, a waterproof sheet was thrown on the ground, a saddle provided a pillow, and a greatcoat a covering. Fortunately it was not a rainy season, but one night something had evidently gone wrong with the elements, for the rain came down in a deluge, and we were all soaked through. In spite of this, however, we mounted our horses in the early morning and rode on until we dried. These are some of the delights of campaigning.

One morning news came that a number of Kaffirs had hidden in some bush near the Buffalo River, and a party of about twenty men were sent to watch them. This was done by groups of three men surrounding the hiding-place and guarding the corners until our Fingoes came up to drive the enemy out. Our Captain, with four men and myself, went up a small mountain to have a look all round. We had been there some time in hiding, when we espied several Kaffirs making off on our left. Giving chase, we came up with them after a short spin, when they at once declared themselves loyal Kaffirs. Unfortunately for them, we found they had four guns and a lot of assegais and no Government passes, so we

tied their hands and marched them back to the bush. As we approached the corner we saw four of the men we had left as sentries fast asleep. The Captain woke them up with a kick. "Where are your rifles?" he asked, and then it turned out these Kaffirs had escaped out of the bush, and stealing the men's guns as they lay asleep, had made off with them, owning afterwards that they did not kill them "as it made too much noise." Over the results of this episode I draw a veil.

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Hearing that the 90th Regiment had arrived at Fort Fordice, I determined to join them.

At first I intended to take the journey with only my two police, but the General dissuaded me, as the chance of coming across some of the wandering Kaffirs was very great and often these so-called loyal Kaffirs were the biggest rascals and thieves.

I left King William's Town with a small convoy for Fort Beaufort, *en route* for Fort Fordice. The roads were so very bad and the bullocks so weak on account of drought, that we took four and a half days to cover the short distance of 53 miles.

Before leaving, my friend Baker suggested that I should apply for two of the Cape Mounted Police to act as guides and escort to me; they would, he said, look after my horse as well.

I did so, and two exceedingly nice fellows were assigned to me.

In the course of conversation with them, I found that one was the son of a London publican and the other the son of a gentleman I knew in England.

I remembered that about a year before I left England I had watched two youngsters, dressed as midshipmen, being seen off at the railway-station at Lee, Kent, to go out to South Africa to join the regiment, which had not long before been raised and was called the "Cape Mounted Rifles." There were all sorts of inducements offered to young fellows to join, and these two, anxious for a life of adventure, had given up the idea of the navy and enlisted in this service.

The fact that the parents of the lads were in easy circumstances impressed me at the time, and now a year later I

discovered, to my surprise, that one of these boys was to accompany me in his capacity as a member of the police force. I need scarcely say I made a friend of him, and the other acted as a servant.

As a rule the police were only allowed to proceed a certain distance, and then two more were assigned, but as a special favour these men were allowed to remain with me for a considerable time.

After journeying many days, I at last arrived in camp at Fort Fordice, where I was heartily welcomed by Colonel Palmer and the officers, a tent being very kindly placed at my disposal between those of Majors Hackett and Cherry.

Shortly after settling down in my tent, my friend Saltmarsh came over to have a chat. He said, "Prior, I have got a little post with thirty men at the top of Blinkwater Hill, and you might come over and dine with me one night; I am only a mile or two away. It is along the main road, and you cannot miss it."

"All right, yes, I will," I replied. "I'll come and dine with you to-morrow."

"Capital," he said.

He was occupying a small house there, and the object of his being at this post was to keep the road open. He had his men patrolling it, and at night had four sentries out, who were relieved every two hours.

We had a nice little dinner, winding up with the inevitable talk, and were sitting one on each side of the table, which was in the middle of the room, with a candle stuck up in the centre of it. We were yarning about what we had done, and what we should do when we got back—yarning as only men out in similar solitary places can—when suddenly with a swish an assegai came through the window and stuck straight upright in the middle of our table.

Some of the enemy were about.

"That's my doom, Prior," said my companion, as he blew out the candle.

Seizing our revolvers, we dashed out to the sentries, who were at their posts, and had seen nothing and no one approach the house.

But there was the assegai still standing up in the middle of the table.

There was nothing to be done but to double the sentries ; it was a pitch-dark night, and we went to sleep feeling rather nervous, for with only five-and-twenty men, it would have been long odds against us had a determined attack been made on the post.

I do not like to say that Saltmarsh had a presentiment of his impending death, but from his subsequent manner and conversation I felt sure that he had, and strangely enough he was killed shortly afterwards.

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The Colonel informed me he had done everything in his power to induce the chief Tiny Macomo to give in. He had even sent in two prisoners with letters written in Kaffir and English, for one of Tiny Macomo's wives spoke and read English thoroughly well.

In the last letter he promised that no harm should come to the chief or his people if they delivered themselves up, but otherwise he would attack and kill every one of them. The only response to this was so unsatisfactory that the Colonel determined to attack.

The enemy appeared very warlike ; in the evening they lit great fires, and we could see the war-dance going on, accompanied by waving of weapons and shouts of defiance.

They were working themselves up into the necessary frenzy, while the medicine men painted the warriors with broad stripes of paint on the forehead and served out to each man a charmed necklace, made of string or sinew, with a piece of wood hanging from it, which, if bitten during the fight, would keep the biter from being shot.

Either the string was bad or the wood of the wrong sort, or else they did not bite hard enough, for nearly all the men killed had necklaces on, and sometimes the wood was gnawed through in the throes of death.

The preparations gave just the necessary excitement to our men, and when the order in the morning came for marching, every one was pleased.

It is necessary when fighting Kaffirs to rise at a most unreasonable hour, so as to attack them at the break of day.

Major Hackett, with fifty men, was ordered to march at one o'clock to take up a position by a farmhouse at the base of the

Iron Mountain, in order to prevent any of the enemy breaking through from one bush to another.

As our principal fight was to be in the Waterkloof and Iron Mountain, all the approaches to it were held either by men of the 90th Regiment, or by volunteers, or Fingoes, while the object of the main column was to drive the Káffirs out of the bush into the hands of these different guards. A very strict order was given that not one word was to be spoken, either when falling in in the morning or on the march, and it was astonishing how wonderfully the order was carried out.

Major Hackett and his men had the most dangerous and difficult march of any, as it was so pitch-dark that they could scarcely see each other.

I had intended starting with the Major, who was as brave as a lion, but while my horse was being saddled and I was fastening up my tent in the middle of the camp, the troops left, and so quietly was it done, that, although within fifty feet of me, I did not even hear the tread of the men as they marched. This is a thing to be noticed as showing what discipline means. No troops in the world could have behaved better.

So I went with Major Cherry, who was in command of the main body of our troops, and in about twenty minutes we halted, as we had arrived at our appointed ground.

We started about 5 a.m. The pass in the Waterkloof we had to go through was only just wide enough to admit the guns, so Fingoes were sent into the bush to act as scouts on the right and left flanks, while the mounted Diamond Fields Volunteers, several hundreds in number, as well as the German, Dutch, and Colonial farmer volunteers, were to advance first. The moment they were through they had orders to gallop as hard as they could and take up a position about four miles on our right. The Colonials with our remaining companies of the 90th then followed with the guns and ambulance carts, the rear being brought up by more volunteers and Fingoes.

Just as we arrived at the middle of the bush in a ravine and were mounting the opposite side, we heard firing, which gradually increased, until it appeared as though heavy work must be going on.

We all pushed on as hard as we could, and soon found ourselves at the top of a hill, overlooking the particular spot from which the firing proceeded. Although it appeared to be quite

close, we found it to be a very long distance off; the air was so clear and light that one was wonderfully deceived as to distance.

The volunteers, it seemed, had come up with a party of Kaffirs who were just cutting up an ox to cook for their breakfasts. They had fled in all directions at the first shot.

Firing over their shoulders as they ran, they made for cover, but the noise and ping, ping of our bullets soon disturbed the Kaffir cattle. They dashed out of the bush in droves, which we very soon commandeered. Meantime the enemy was pouring in a shower of bullets from the bush, in return for which they received a deadly storm of lead. Then up came the guns, and the bush was shelled. The next thing was to set fire to the native villages, where, unfortunately, a wounded man in one of the huts was burnt to death.

A large number of women and children had taken refuge behind a hill; but when they saw their kraals being burnt they came out, and it was pitiable to see their faces as they watched their houses and goods being destroyed. They were soon marched off under an escort for the nearest port; there is no doubt that the capturing of women and children, and sending them away to the Cape Colony, had a wonderful effect in bringing this wretched little war to a close.

The native does not like to lose his wives, and naturally he did not know what was going to happen to them. At the close of the war, however, they were all returned, and it must have been amusing to see the warriors searching out and choosing their wives from a crowd of many hundreds.

An old Kaffir, apparently lame, suddenly appeared as we were shelling Iron Mountain: he darted out of the bush across an open piece of ground to make for the opposite cover.

Our doctor, the first to see him, gave the alarm, and instantly fifteen to twenty men had a pot-shot at him. There must have been at least thirty shots fired, but he either had a charmed life or the luck of the evil one, for although within a hundred yards of us not one shot touched him—even our sergeant-major (a dead shot) missed him.

We could see he wore a jacket, a pair of artillerymen's trousers, a felt hat, and a blanket trailed behind him. Although he had a damaged leg he was going like a hare, and got away safely. It turned out later that this was the great chief, Tiny Macomo, himself.

Everybody, however, felt pretty well satisfied with the morning's work, particularly as we knew the enemy had lost their cattle, most of their women, and all their huts.

The Diamond Field Volunteers were under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Warren, and as he had no gun, he coolly lay down during one engagement and assisted in holding the men's horses, every now and then looking up to see how the fight progressed and to give instructions.

Most of the enemy did get across the open, but in one case I saw a Kaffir running as we fired at him, and I could see him suddenly stagger, then go on, then again halt, and on again; but at last he fell prone to the ground, and when the fight was over we examined him. We found he had been hit by nine Martini-Henry bullets, and it was only the last one that had killed him. He had a broken arm, a broken leg, and a piece out of the back of his skull, and yet that man, with all those wounds, had been travelling hard.

One day later Captain Stevens, with his company of eighty men, went out and did some very good work, coming across a large party of Kaffirs, who put up quite a nice little fight. A great number were killed, and over two hundred women and children were captured, amongst them Tiny Macomo's chief wife. This rascal himself was nearly caught. When they arrived in camp there was a general rush to see the prisoners. Some of them were old hags, but there were a large number of finely built women, whose clothes were remarkably scanty, those of the young girls and children being conspicuous by their absence. I soon found Mrs. Macomo, and easily persuaded her to sell me her bracelets and snuff-box and necklaces. Having thus started buying, I went the round of the women, examining their adornments, and eventually returned to my tent with quite a collection, amongst which was some very clever bead-work, which I have to this day. The Colonel, being determined, if possible, to catch the chief, who had been causing all the trouble about there, sent out a number of patrols of about fifty men each, but without success.

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I came down from Fort Beaufort with a convoy, as the roads were not considered safe enough for me to travel with only my two policemen, Sandilli (the chief) being, it was said, in the bush. His men were constantly prowling about in search of cattle,

and anything else they could steal from the white man. After leaving the town called Alice we came across numbers of Kaffirs, at least one hundred and fifty men, women and children, but we could do nothing with them, as they were said to be loyal Kaffirs and had a pass (fancy loyal Kaffirs in a Kaffir war !). The Kaffir was certainly loyal when it answered his purpose, but at any time he could dig up his gun and assegais and take to the bush as a warrior—and nearly all of them did so.

They positively had no passes, and were armed to the teeth, yet they were allowed to go free where they liked, because they said they were loyal !

One night we heard the bellowing of a number of cattle, but thinking they belonged to wagon teams, no notice was taken of it. The next morning, however, we found the "spoors" of at least a hundred cattle, which had been driven from the fields along the road for about five miles, suddenly disappearing into the thick bush where Sandilli and about two thousand of his warriors were known to be in hiding. This was a clear proof of what was going on, and yet if we had stopped loyal Kaffirs in charge of these cattle, they would no doubt have produced their passes and said the beasts belonged to this or that farmer, and were being taken to graze or to water. These people are so sly and sharp that they always have a ready answer.

On another occasion, during the same expedition, I was passing by an old blacksmith's forge—a very large shanty built of wood, with iron roof. Peering in, I found it full of women and children, who were lying and squatting about, trying to look quite indifferent. I called to my friend the Captain to come and have a look at them. Walking about, I chanced to put my foot on one of their mats and felt something hard and strange underneath, so leaning down, I turned up the corner of the mat, the woman doing all she could to prevent me—but I was satisfied, for I had seen something which interested me.

"I should advise you to put a guard of your men over the door and let not a woman or child escape," I said to the officer, winking at him, and then, turning round, I soon had that woman up, and beneath the mat I found guns and assegais. A general search resulted in a large number of weapons being discovered, together with a quantity of gunpowder hidden under the women, rugs, and clothing. There was a general

howling and lamentation as we confiscated the lot. After that experience we searched anywhere, anything, and every one—with wonderful results.

On my return down country to King William's Town, I was fortunate enough to be present at a conference between General Thesiger and the different heads of the volunteer corps, well-known farmers, and Dutch and German Boers.

The conversation turned on the prospects of the Zulu War, as it was known that that nation was very disturbed.

The Burghers and Boers, who had fought the Zulus in days gone by, assured General Thesiger that any army fighting the Zulus would have to laager at every halt made after crossing the border. General Thesiger said, "Oh, British troops are all right; we do not laager—we have a different formation."

The Boers again and again assured him that it would be absolutely necessary, and that no column ought to halt for breakfast or dinner under any circumstances without laagering.

Again General Thesiger smiled at the notion, but I was very much impressed at the earnest and serious way in which the Boers explained the risk, and the necessity for this action. So firmly was I convinced that if General Thesiger, afterwards Lord Chelmsford, did command the British troops he would not take this sound advice and laager, that on my return to England, in conversation with Mr. William Ingram, I explained this matter to him, and said, "You take my word for it, if we do have a war with the Zulus, the first news we shall get will be that of a disaster"—and sure enough I was correct. We all must remember that the first serious news to reach England with regard to that campaign was the slaughter and almost annihilation of our column at Isandlwana.

CHAPTER V

THE ZULU WAR. 1879-80

I THINK I have said before in this book of reminiscences that I cannot attempt to give a detailed description of the wars, but I think I may mention the cause which led to the conflict with King Cetewayo. He had not been provoked by the British Government; they had done their best to avoid trouble.

Ever since the days of Chaka, whose reign extended from 1810 to 1828, the Zulus have been regarded as the military race of South Africa. At the time of the war in 1879 King Cetewayo possessed a force of over 40,000 men well organised and fairly well equipped, the army being divided into regiments varying in strength from 400 to 2,000, each commanded by an induna, or chief.

In former years a bundle of light assegais, a short and heavy one for stabbing, a shield and a knobkerry, were the arms of the Zulu soldier, but now many regiments were armed with breech-loading rifles. In each case the stabbing assegai was still carried, but the shield was discarded.

In 1873 with the aid of some Europeans a small powder factory was established, and a magazine built at the principal military kraal, which was called Mainze Kanze, meaning "Let the enemy come now."

Matrimony was forbidden to the soldier, but periodically the King would order a whole regiment to marry, and to select for their wives the daughters of men belonging to some special regiment.

The strictest discipline was enforced throughout the army, cowardice on all occasions being punished by death. The women were in charge of the commissariat, and they would travel forty and fifty miles a day when carrying supplies to the army in the field.

The Zulu has an innate love of fighting, and firmly believes in his own invincibility. Such is the military character of the nation against whom we were about to wage war.

When the news of the disaster at Isandlwana reached England, a meeting of the Cabinet was hastily summoned, and it was then decided to despatch a strong force of Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers, and Army Service Corps men as reinforcements to the Cape. I was ordered out by my office.

There was a number of officers on board the s.s. *German*, hurrying out to Natal in consequence of the reverses we had received, amongst them Major Charles Bromhead, who had only been married two years, and who was going out to take up the command of the remaining few companies of the 24th Regiment which had suffered so severely.

It was his brother, Lieutenant Bromhead of the 24th, who, with Lieutenant Chard, R.E., won the V.C.—that much-coveted decoration—for their magnificent and heroic defence of Rorke's Drift. Their action no doubt saved Natal from invasion by the enemy.

I am now going to mention a subject of which I am not particularly proud. I had been through several campaigns, some of them very disagreeable ones. I had run many risks and fear had never entered into my mind, but unfortunately, on my journey out on this occasion, I had a bad dream. I call it a dream, but I think it must have been a nightmare. It took place after I had arrived at Durban.

Now this nightmare had such an effect on me that I have never forgotten it. I dreamed that I went with the relieving force to rescue Colonel Pearson at Etchowe. I saw myself shot, and I saw myself buried.

Strange to say, by the next mail arriving from England I received a letter from my mother, in which she told me she had had a dream that I had gone with the relieving column to Etchowe, that I had been killed, and that she had seen my funeral, and she wound up by begging me most earnestly not to go with that column, and it is now that I am ashamed to own that this had such an effect on me that I made up my mind I would not go, and even wrote to Mr. William Ingram at my office to inform him of my determination. Some weeks later I received a cablegram from him: "Sorry you did

not accompany force, no doubt saved for better things to come."

However, I did not wish the *Illustrated* to be unrepresented in this expedition, and I succeeded in enlisting the services of Colonel Crealock, the Chief of the Staff, and also engaged the services of a private individual named Porter.

Now comes the curious incident of this act of mine. When the fighting did take place, at Ginghilovo, on the road to Etchowe, my specially appointed artist was one of the first killed.

Whether I believe in presentiments may or may not be interesting to any one, but this case is surely curious.

At the Royal Hotel I met a Mr. Walter Peace, who a few years after was appointed High Commissioner for Natal in England. He informed me he was going out to the Tugela, whence the troops were to start for the relief of Colonel Pearson at Etchowe. He had already engaged a carriage and offered me a seat, so I had an opportunity of seeing the troops and making a sketch of them starting on the expedition, and I slept that night in the tent of the commissary, General Strickland. He was very kind to us, and gave us breakfast, and then we started back, and I arrived once more in Durban, feeling rather ashamed of my want of pluck.

During the time that the column was operating for the relief of Colonel Pearson I was engaged sketching the arrival of fresh troops from England, and the many interesting scenes to be found in Durban.

The Post Office did not seem to be conducted exactly in a way that one would expect in a British colony. I was actually told seriously that I must register my sketches and photos, or they might not reach England, as the clerks were very fond of opening any parcel that they thought might be of interest, and in the case of my sketches it was quite possible for them to keep them; and I was also informed that I must register them eighteen hours before the mail left. On hearing this I went to the Union Steamship Company's offices, and they very kindly said they would put my sketches and any of the correspondents' letters in their private boxes which are taken direct to the ship sailing for England, and would thus avoid any risk of our letters being opened.

One day, going to the post office about a little matter, as a

kind of test I asked the post-master how late I could post at his office, and he said at half-past six, "but be sure," he added, "that you put on enough stamps, as otherwise your letter will not go."

I stared at him in astonishment, and asked if he really meant what he said. "Do you really mean to say, sir, that if I put on a shilling stamp, and it is not enough by one penny, that my letter will not go?"

He replied, "Certainly not."

When I asked him what became of it, he replied, it would be put on some shelf and left. And this is how the Post Office in those days was conducted.

The other correspondents, on hearing this, devoted an article to the management of the post office at Durban, not much to its credit, I fear; but on representing this matter to headquarters things were soon put right.

As the time drew near for a move forward we were informed that Lord Chelmsford had decided to issue military passes to the correspondents. This was the first time that such a thing, I believe, had been done, and one or two of the Press men were rather indignant and annoyed at this new regulation, but eventually we all realised that it would be really and truly for our benefit, for no outsider would be allowed to go to the front without this authorisation. We were asked to draw up a form of pass, which was eventually agreed upon, and accepted by the General. It was then printed, and as each was signed by him and handed over, he informed us smilingly that without it we might be sent back from the front as vagabonds under arrest.

As the reinforcements were arriving and going forward, the time had arrived when I had to decide whether I would go with the coast column or with that of General Newdigate, and I decided on the latter, as I heard Lord Chelmsford was going to accompany it.

The correspondents' trouble in these times is the same as a general's in regard to transport and commissariat. You must have luggage, you must have provisions, the difficulty is to know how to transport them. In this case a correspondent invited me to join him in purchasing a carriage and horses for our luggage. I had always made up my mind to be independent of any one, but on this occasion I gave way. When, however, I saw the enormous amount of luggage that he crammed into the cart, even his steamer trunk, I was certainly well satisfied

that this arrangement would not last very long. However, the cart was packed, and I sent it off in charge of my man George. He was to go by steady marches from Durban to Maritzburg, and was to wait for me, as I proposed going up to Pine Town and Bowker's Hill by rail, and thence on by post cart. The difficulty was to know what to do with my two riding horses. I called on the Chief of the Police, Captain Hannay, who was an Englishman, and a rare good fellow. I asked him if he could give me two of his police to lead them to Maritzburg, which was a distance of fifty-eight miles.

He said, "Well, Mr. Prior, if you take my advice, you will engage two raw Kaffirs. I am sorry to say my police are not to be depended on. They are simply rascals, every one of them. They would ride your horses all the way, let them eat grass, would not go near an hotel, and would thus rob you of their keep. Whereas, if you like I will send you two Kaffirs with their blankets, and you may depend on them to act honestly by you."

The following morning they arrived. I gave them my horses, money to pay for their feeds at the hotels, and a promise of a certain sum for the journey.

On starting I had been careful to chalk the animals' backs and put my initials underneath the saddles, for it is an old dodge, if you chalk the top of the saddle, for the Kaffir to take it off the horse's back and ride the animal, carrying the saddle on his head.

Pine Town I found to be one of the most charming little country places I had seen in South Africa. This place had also been laagered and stockaded, as a precaution against the Zulu raid.

From Pine Town I took the train to Bowker's Hill, which is reckoned about half-way. In those days the trains took three hours to do thirty-three miles, and the post cart did the other thirty-five miles also in three hours. This does not say much for the speed of railway travelling in South Africa.

Just as I was getting into the post cart, four officers I did not know came up and requested me to get out, saying that I must wait until next day, as they had to go forward at once. My answer was a smile. They were young, and rather rude, but when I produced my pass and my receipt for the seat they were profuse in their apologies.

I found post-cart travelling here as bad as in Kaffraria—only a little worse.

Away we tore, up hill and down dale, all at the same pace, the driver sounding a horn nearly all the way. Across drifts and swampy roads that had been made good by branches of trees, when the driver would call out, and you had to hang on like grim death.

Sure enough, when I arrived at the Windsor Hotel at Maritzburg my two raw Kaffirs were already there, and they produced receipts from the different hotels they had stopped at on the road for food for themselves and fodder for the horses, and on examining the saddles and horses I found my initials intact.

My man informed me that he had had terrible trouble with the cart and luggage, so much so that I decided to alter the arrangement with regard to the other correspondent, and the following morning went in search of a cart for myself.

I found a second-hand dog-cart, for which I paid £25. I had it examined by a wheelwright, who charged me two sovereigns for pretending to do to it something which I could not see. He then pronounced it in good condition.

Archibald Forbes, that brilliant military correspondent of the *Daily News*, had arrived. I was highly delighted to meet him once more.

While chatting with him and some officers, I heard for the first time of the death of Major Hackett, of the 90th. I was awfully grieved, for he was such a fine fellow and had been so kind to me during the Kaffir War. It appeared that at the battle of Kambula Hill, a bullet hit him on the left-hand side of the face, breaking the bridge of the nose, and carrying away both his eyes. This affected the brain to such an extent that when being treated by the surgeons he called out for the blinds to be drawn up, as he wanted to see.

In this horrible state he lingered for several weeks. Poor Hackett!

Having at last arranged to go forward to join General Newdigate's column, I had my cart packed with tinned provisions, wines, spirits, &c. The horses were put in. All was then ready for a grand start. There was quite a crowd at the hotel, standing outside to see me leave. My man had been accustomed to horses and driving all his life, and came out of

the yard in great style. He was proceeding down the road, when all of a sudden, without any previous warning, and to my horror, I saw the cart turn completely upside down and all my chattels and goods go flying in all directions. Away I ran, followed by a crowd, to find out what the reason was. I could not blame the man, for I had seen the collapse. On examining the cart, the cause of the accident was quite clear; one of the wheels was so rotten that it had given, and the bolts of the springs had also come away. This looked like a dead loss; however, I was not to be done. I went to a coach-builder and bought a brand-new buggy, for which I gave £40.

Once more we packed my goods, barring the broken bottles of whisky, and I made another start, this time with great success.

The main road from Maritzburg up country is one long, continuous hill of about four miles, and it took fully two hours to mount it.

What with driving the horses and pushing the cart, when we arrived at the top my man was pretty well done up. I found there was a little store there, and I asked him if he would like a drink. "Yes, please, sir." He said he would like a glass of beer best, so I told the storekeeper to bring a glass of beer, and to bring me some Hollands and water, better known as "Square-face" or "White Velvet," as Archie Forbes had nicknamed it. When it came to paying, I discovered that my drink was sixpence, but my man's four shillings, whereupon I gave him due notice that that was the last drink of beer he would have until he returned to Durban. Four shillings for a bottle of beer up country I found was the regular price, when it wasn't five shillings.

My little trip from Maritzburg to Ladysmith was carried out in this way:—

Howick	...	...	...	...	13 miles.
Currie's Post	...	...	...	...	12 "
Mooi River	...	...	...	...	16 "
Griffin's Farm...	...	...	...	...	14 "
Estcourt	...	...	...	...	8 "
Blaawkrantz	...	...	...	...	11 "
Colenso	...	...	...	...	10 "
Rising Sun	...	...	...	...	8 "
Ladysmith	...	...	...	...	16 "

At Ladysmith I set to work to finish up the sketches I had made on the road and went over to the post, when I was informed that the mail cart would not be able to start that day, as the driver had been found drunk, and as there was no one else able to drive the mail cart it would not be able to start until after he had become sober.

This sounds most extraordinary, but it is nevertheless a fact. This man, however, eventually drove the cart at such a pace that he picked up a whole day's journey on the road, and actually did save the mail boat at Durban.

At Ladysmith I was on the veranda of the hotel, smoking, when a bold and impudent young Kaffir on horseback, dressed in a smoking cap with gold tassels and white breeches and top boots, in fact got up generally in a most extravagant manner, and accompanied by four others, apparently servants, rode up in front of the hotel. Seeing some Kaffir that he knew, he called out in thorough English, and with a large amount of swagger, "God damme, damned hot. I'm just riding into the city. Can't stop to chat with you fellows now!" and with a jocular wave of the hand, put spurs to his horse and galloped on. One could not help smiling at this, because it was so evidently picked up from the white men.

This was what is called a Christian Kaffir, for whom every one has the greatest contempt. A Missionary Kaffir becomes a liar and a thief, and the women, as soon as they put on stockings, lose all sense of morality, whereas a raw Kaffir is one of the most honest men to be found in the world and the women are most virtuous. The hotel-keeper told me that one day he had been counting up money to send to the bank, and just as he had finished he was called away suddenly, and left his cash-box in the bar. Later on he shut up the house and went to bed, forgetting he had left the money. But he had not been in bed half an hour when one of his raw Kaffirs, who always slept in the bar, came to his door and tapped and made him get up, telling him he had left his money on the table.

"Come, master, come get it; some thieves might find it!" and when he went with the Kaffir he found it all there—not a penny of two hundred pounds had gone.

Now this man might have taken it all, run away, and never been seen any more; he could have bought cattle and wives and been a rich man for the rest of his life.

That same evening, about five o'clock, my boy came to me with a face as white as a ghost, and, in a terrible fright, said that he had lost my horses. He had knee-haltered them as usual, and let them loose to graze, and then suddenly he had lost sight of them. There is no doubt the young rascal had lain down on the ground, fallen fast asleep, and in the meantime his charges had wandered afar. I thought the best thing to do was to go to the magistrate and ask for some Kaffir policemen to search for them. He said it was impossible, as by this time it was very dark, but added they would be all right and perfectly safe until the morning. However, when the moon came up, my boy started off again up the hills and was away most of the night, but without success.

Suddenly the idea occurred to me that they might have gone over to join the artillery and cavalry horses, so I told him to go over and have a look for them there, and after a tramp of about five miles he came up with the herd grazing, and in an extraordinary short space of time picked out my two with great glee, and brought them back to me.

Mr. Fripp, the artist of the *Graphic*, was less fortunate than myself, for he lost one and never recovered it. Our animals were a terrible trouble to us in this way, because of those horrible ticks, while I lost one of my best horses with that vile sickness called Red Water. He had been ill for two days, when I found him lying on the ground apparently in awful agony. The veterinary surgeon assured me he could not live, and the officers begged me to shoot him and put him out of his misery.

I went to my tent to fetch my revolver to do so, when some one called out to me, "Never mind, Prior, the poor brute is dead." He must have suffered terribly, for he had pulled up the ground with his teeth and feet, and his mouth was full of earth. I was awfully sorry, for he was my best horse; but oxen as well as horses were dying all round.

I went on to Langhan's Drift, the headquarters of General Newdigate, who received me most kindly. The same evening I was asked by the officers of the Artillery to dine, and some of them came to fetch me. Having enjoyed a good dinner and a pleasant evening, I started off to return to my tent. But what a trouble I had to find it! It was very dark, and everywhere I went I was being challenged by sentries. At last I

spotted my humble abode, which was a peculiar shape, being perfectly square. Everybody was asleep and the camp was quite quiet, but as I advanced a man who was doing sentry-go just in front of my tent challenged me in the ordinary way, "Halt! who goes there?" "Friend," I replied. "Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"I have not got the countersign, sentry; I am not a Zulu."

"I dare say, sir, but I cannot let you pass without the countersign."

"Hang it all, I cannot go back at this time of night and disturb people for it. Can't you see I am a white man?" and I gave him my name; but he was still resolute. At last I whispered, "Look here, sentry, you let me go to my tent and I will give you a little whisky." This was the open sesame, and at last I was allowed to go inside. I passed him out a glass very quietly, for I knew I was doing wrong to tempt the man on his beat, although it did seem absurd that, as a white man crossing the camp, I should be challenged as though one of the enemy.

Another night I was lying in my tent, not asleep, when I heard the sentries calling out their numbers round the camp. The first sentry called out "Number one and all's well," then, in a shrill voice, "Number two and all's well," and "Number three is fast asleep." Then immediately, in a gruff voice, "Number three and all's well, and number four is a d—— liar."

Talking of the Artillery reminds me that one day the Rev. G. Smith, the parson who behaved so magnificently at Rorke's Drift when the Zulus attacked it, came over to have a chat with me. I found him a most delightful fellow, one of the quiet but impressive men. I shall have more to say about him later on, but on this occasion we were chatting outside my tent when we heard that the whole of the Artillery horses had stampeded. They were out grazing with the usual guard when something startled them, and they dashed madly into camp, unfortunately making straight for the corner where my little tent was.

As they came on in a dense mass and a cloud of dust, I felt as though the end of the world was upon us, but this brave parson stood on one side and I on the other waving our hands and shouting at them, and by sheer good luck they went by either side of us, knocking over other tents instead of

mine, catching in the ropes, and rolling over many of the tent-pegs.

They then made a rush for the Lancers' camp, several officers having a very narrow escape; the veterinary surgeon, in his endeavours to stop them, met with a slight accident.

Suddenly the order was given for the feeding bugle to be sounded, and it was the prettiest sight imaginable to see these horses, that had been dashing about wildly, suddenly make for their respective places and actually stand still for their nose-bags to be put on; while this was being done they were easily caught and fastened up.

Hospitality to the correspondents was the rule in camp. I dined with the General and Staff and the clergymen: by these latter I mean the Rev. Smith and Father Brindle—the beloved Catholic priest—with the Lancers, Dragoons, Artillery, Surgeons, and in fact everybody who had a mess.

My tent in the daytime was looked upon as an artist's studio, and became the rendezvous of all the best fellows in camp during the lazy hours. There was a little cupboard love as well, I think, added to it, for my servant had a wonderful knack of making the most lovely Indian-corn porridge, and very often, instead of the afternoon cup of tea, this stuff went round and the fellows ate it with condensed milk or jam.

Zululand is a rare place for falls; even General Newdigate was laid up for some time owing to a spill from his horse. The fact is, the whole country is studded with ant-hills, and there are any number of ant-bears, notoriously fond of ants, and adopting a method of satisfying their appetite calculated to cause considerable trouble to a rider galloping carelessly across country. The little animal very much resembles a small pig, he has a strong snout and a long tongue, and his method is to dig a hole in the ground a little distance from the ant-hill, and, having burrowed underneath, he inserts his tongue into the tunnel and allows the ants to crawl over and settle on it. As soon as he feels there are a sufficient number collected there to please him, he suddenly withdraws his tongue and swallows the little luxuries.

This process he keeps repeating until he has about finished off the little village or colony residing in each hill. Unfortunately he does not trouble to fill up the holes again, and the long grass, in most cases falling or being blown across

the top of them, you cannot see the danger. Very often, instead of "'Ware wire," it is a case of "'Ware holes."

One morning I was riding with Archibald Forbes down to a collection of huts in search of milk. We heard afterwards it was not always from cows or goats, but we were charged sixpence a bottle, the women settling their share of the money amongst themselves. On this occasion I had my first fall.

We were galloping hard when my horse put both his front legs into one of these ant-bear holes, about two and a half feet deep, and his chest coming up against the opposite side, naturally knocked all the wind out of him, and brought him up so suddenly that I was shot out of my saddle like a stone from a catapult, turning a complete somersault, and landing on the ground with my head towards the horse. My helmet was smashed out of all shape, my hand, arms, and legs grazed, and I was shaken to pieces generally.

* * * * *

The battlefield of Isandlwana was to be revisited, and General Marshall, who was in command of all the cavalry, was also to command the expeditionary force. It took some little time to organise it, but eventually we started on the 21st of May, exactly four months after the terrible disaster which attended the opening of the war. This expedition from camp grew in size and interest every hour, many wishing in vain to go. I had to obtain express permission from the General, who said he would allow me to join provided I gave him a letter stating that I would take the risk on my own shoulders. This I did, and received the following permission from headquarters, on a slip of blue paper—

“MEMO.—

Mr. Prior has permission to move with the Column to Ingatu and Isandlwana during this week at his own risk.

(Signed) E. NEWDIGATE, Maj. Gen.”

18.5.79

We left at seven o'clock in the morning, and halted at mid-day at Robson's Farm, about twelve miles out, and then went on again for Rorke's Drift, which we reached about four in the afternoon, where the column was to bivouac for the night.

By this time we had been joined by the left wing of the

Lancers. These with their flying pennons, and the whole of the Dragoons with their red coats, made a most picturesque effect as we travelled through the misty valleys and mountainous scenery.

About a mile before we halted I came across Major Bromhead, who was pleased to see me again, and took me in charge at once, insisting that I should share his room in Fort Melville for the night. We then rode on to where the grand defence had taken place, and he showed me all over it. Certainly it seemed to me marvellous, considering the position, how that small body of men had been able to resist the onslaught of the Zulus. He then took me down to a new and strong fort that had been built on the banks of the River Buffalo, and introduced me to his brother, one of the heroes of Rorke's Drift.

Next morning we started at six o'clock, four hundred men of the 24th having joined the column.

At last the historical hill of Isandlwana came in sight. All glasses were soon out to examine the place, and the wagons were easily seen, still there, not one having been taken away by the enemy. As we got closer I started on at a gallop, and arrived at the top of the hollow just behind the advance Lancers; and then a sight presented itself that it is impossible to describe or to forget.

In all the campaigns I have been in I have not witnessed a scene more horrible. I have seen the dead and dying on a battlefield by hundreds and thousands, but to come suddenly on the spot where the slaughtered battalion of the 24th Regiment and others were lying at Isandlwana was appalling. Here I saw not the bodies, but the skeletons, of men whom I had seen in life and health, some of whom I had known well, mixed up with the skeletons of oxen and horses, with wagons overthrown on their sides, all in the greatest confusion, showing how furious had been the attack of the enemy. Amidst the various articles belonging to our men, and now scattered over the field of carnage, were letters from wives at home to their husbands in the field, from English fathers and mothers to their sons, portraits of babies and children sent by mothers to the loving fathers—one was signed to "dear darling Dadda"—and other homely little things, remembrances of the dearest associations. I picked up a cigarette-paper book with Coghill's signature in it, also a letter from Mrs. Melville telling her husband how

her little boy kept asking when papa was coming home, and then one from his father so full of affection that at last I could not help the tears coming into my eyes when I thought how he was then lying a skeleton above Refugee's Drift. Strangely enough, I found a letter from Lieut. Coghill to Melville, and these two poor fellows were then lying side by side. Well, I saw the most miserable sight I have ever seen, and heard the most piteous tales.

My boy picked up an assegai out of a white man's skull; it was in the mouth, and had pinned him to the ground. The second 24th drum was found, and the flag-staff, but alas! the colours were gone—the colours which these grand officers, Coghill and Melville, had so gallantly tried to save.

Skeletons of men lay on the open ground, bleaching under a tropical sun, along miles of country. The individuals could only be recognised by such things as a ring on a finger-bone, a letter or knife, an armet or neck-chain (which, considered as a fetish, the Zulus would not touch). This identification could only be made with much difficulty, for either the hands of the enemy or the beaks and claws of vultures tearing up the corpses, had, in numberless cases, so mixed up the bones of the dead that the skull of one man, or bones of a leg or arm, now lay with parts of the skeleton of another. The Lancers went about all over the field, often here and there lifting the clothes off the skeletons, or gently pushing them on one side with their lances to see what regiment they belonged to. I almost regretted to see this done, for it seemed like sacrilege, yet it was the wiser course than to run the risk of blood-poisoning by touching the bodies with the hands, and those hands mostly troubled with Natal sores.

All this time scouting parties had been firing the Zulu kraals all round, which were blazing brilliantly, while other parties were engaged in hitching the spare horses that had been brought with the column on to some forty wagons and water carts, which were found sufficiently fit to travel, and these having been started off under escort, the return march was commenced, and we returned to Rorke's Drift tired and weary, not only on account of the twenty-five miles of country we had traversed, but by reason of the mournful and melancholy sights we had seen.

During the evening I heard that on the following day there

was to be an expedition over the Refugee's Drift where Coghill and Melville had been overtaken by the enemy.

I unfortunately started a little late, and had to hurry along to overtake the column. Arriving at a turn in the road I saw Captain Curling, R.A., halted. He greeted me with, "Hullo, Prior! not seeing you with the others I turned back to fetch you for fear you should lose the road" (just like the good fellow that he was), "but now you are here, let us get along quickly," and we proceeded at a full gallop. Just, however, as we were getting up to Colonel Drury Lowe, who commanded the Lancers, I had my second fall, for my horse stumbled into another ant-bear hole, this time throwing me over his neck, the impetus being so great that he turned a kind of side somersault and came thumping down on top of me. Unfortunately the saddle caught my leg which was under him, and my knee-cap was pushed out of joint, his hindquarters resting on my shoulders, and his heels within a few inches of my head. Had he started kicking I should soon have been tucked up, but I heard the Colonel say, "Now then men, help Mr. Prior; can't you see he is in trouble?"

I believe I gave a scream as the horse was pulled off me, for my foot was in the stirrup-iron, and as he jumped up and dragged me, I felt the knee-cap slip into its place with a snap. This gave me such agony for a moment that as I lay on the ground I tore up the long grass by the roots.

I now had lots of assistance, and brandy and rum were poured down my throat.

On hearing the suggestion that I should be sent back to camp, I protested, and begged to be allowed to go on, and was assisted to my horse again. I was determined to see and sketch the grave of poor Coghill and Melville, and to see poor Stewart Smith's skeleton buried; but how I managed to ride the six and a half miles I cannot to this day imagine. To make matters worse, I had to dismount going down the mountain-side, as it was so steep I could not ride.

I have never been an athlete or an acrobat, but they told me that my hops and jumps on this occasion were a most creditable performance. Wading through the rushing Buffalo River, then up a still steeper hill on the other side was a great undertaking.

It was a most horrible place, and poor Stewart Smith was

evidently shot as he was racing down the mountain. Just as he was being buried, I picked up a threepenny-piece, which I handed to Colonel Harness, R.A. (his late Colonel), who was very pleased to have it. I was informed that when Melville and Coghill made the dash to save the colours of the 24th Regiment, Melville unfortunately damaged his knee in getting across the river, and had so much difficulty in climbing the hill on the other side that he begged Coghill to go on and leave him to his fate. But Coghill stood by him, and succeeded in dragging and helping him almost to the top, within fifty yards of comparative safety, for many of our men were on the top of the hill with horses and were firing and killing the enemy as they advanced. Both these brave fellows died hard, for a large number of Zulus were found round them. They had chosen a place between two rocks to make their last stand, and died back to back, gallantly trying to save the Queen's colours.

Our object being accomplished, we started on the return journey. I succeeded in riding my horse back as far as Rorke's Drift. This was about four hours from the time of my fall, but my knee was now swollen to such an extent, and the pain was so intense, that at last I had to be lifted off my horse and left there for the night.

At six the next morning, an ambulance wagon arrived to fetch me, and I was then put into a hospital tent and examined and patched up by the surgeon, Surgeon-Major Brown, who attended the General for an almost similar accident, and, so assiduous was he in fomenting my knee, that at the end of a week, when the column at last started on the road for Ulundi, I was almost able to walk. Fortunately I had a carriage, and my man rode my horse.

Now General Newdigate was ready to continue the march for Ulundi. Spies had been captured, and been interrogated, communication had been opened with King Cetewayo without any satisfactory result, and the order was out that the column would start in the morning. Landman's Drift was the last point in communication by telegraph with Natal—so when we left it was like saying goodbye. We were still 110 miles from Ulundi, and we could only travel very slowly on account of the ox-wagons, which only covered, at the best, about two and a half miles an hour.

In consequence of my accident I rode in my cart, and found

it tedious to a degree having to go so slowly, but in course of time we arrived at the historical position of Itelezi, where we laagered. I say "historical," as it was from here that the Prince Imperial of France started on that memorable reconnoitring expedition which ended so fatally for him. I think I may fairly say that I was the last man he spoke to on leaving camp. It was only a matter of chance, but it occurred in this way.

Our laager was formed by heavy wagons, and as I did not wish to get crushed in amongst them, I had my light buggy at one of the corners, and formed up my own little laager for myself, so that I could have my horses and men and have a camp of my own. It so happened that I was outside my tent in the morning, when I saw the Prince Imperial on horseback coming from the laager, and as he passed me he said, "Good-bye, Mr. Prior."

"Goodbye, sir. I hope you will have a jolly morning," I replied, as he rode away to join Lieutenant Carey and his escort, which consisted of six white men of Bettington's Horse, six Basutos, and a loyal Zulu guide. The object of this expedition was to survey and make a sketch of the next proposed camping ground.

Having seen him disappear in the distance I returned to my tent to work, but a few hours afterwards I realised that I wanted a good piece of background for the sketch I was engaged on, and, ordering my horse, I started out to ride in search of the correct position. I had not gone very far when I saw General Wood and Colonel Buller riding together, and in the extreme distance I saw a man galloping madly towards them. I was not near enough to hear exactly what took place, but it turned out to be Lieutenant Carey returning from the deplorable disaster which had occurred in the village of Itiotiozi.

I heard afterwards that as he approached he was stopped by the General and asked, "Where are you coming from?" He was so exhausted, confused, and nervous that he could scarcely speak, but at last he said that they had been attacked by the Zulus when resting in the village and had had to bolt.

He was immediately asked, "Where is the Prince Imperial?" and holding down his head, with some hesitation he replied he did not know.

No words can express the horror of General Wood and

Colonel Buller when they realised that an officer who had gone out on the expedition senior to the Prince actually replied that he did not know what had become of him.

He was ordered to report himself to General Newdigate, and rode into camp, the General and the Colonel following him.

The news spread like wildfire, and with bated breath every one was talking of the awful news.

As it was too late for a search party to be sent out that night, orders were given for a strong patrol to go out next morning.

Many of the correspondents were allowed to accompany the little force of cavalry under General Marshall, which was sent to find and recover, if possible, not only the body of the Prince Imperial, but also of the others who had not returned to camp the previous evening.

They were the French correspondent of the Paris *Figaro*, Archibald Forbes of the *Daily News*, Francis Francis of *The Times*, Mackenzie of the *Standard*, Charles Fripp of the *Graphic*, and myself. The search party was spread out over a large area, as it was not known where we might come across the bodies of the unfortunate men. I was riding by the side of Forbes, when, a short distance on our left, we saw one of the troop holding up his rifle and calling out loud. Forbes immediately said, "There it is, Prior. Come on, ride for it!" and a magnificent rider he was.

I followed hard on his heels, and was the fourth man to arrive on the spot. There I saw the Prince Imperial lying on his back, stark-naked, with a thin gold chain round his neck, to which was attached a locket containing the portrait of his father, the late Emperor Napoleon the Third. The Zulus had stripped him, and taken away every particle of clothing, but, looking upon this gold chain and locket as a fetish, had respected it, and left it still round his neck.

The French correspondent, leaning over with tears streaming down his face, took an English penny from his pocket and placed it over the Prince's eye (the one which had received a spear-thrust) in the hopes of closing it.

On carefully examining the body it was found that he had been stabbed twenty-one times, and the bodies of the two troopers of Bettington's Horse were found at only a few yards distance, also covered with assegai wounds.

Whilst we gathered round the corpse, vedettes had been posted round the spot for some distance, in case Zulus might be lurking round, and having recovered from the momentary shock and horror of the situation, a stretcher was formed of blankets laid upon Lancers' spears, and the body having been placed upon it, the stretcher was carried to the ambulance wagon, which had been brought out for that purpose, by General Marshall, Colonel Drury Lowe, Major Stewart, and several officers of the 17th Lancers. A procession was then formed, which solemnly marched into camp.

The corpse was next day sent down to Natal and thence to England.

I went to General Newdigate and told him that I wanted to work all night, and asked permission to have a light in my tent. I assured him that I would cover it round with a blanket and that it should not be seen outside in the smallest degree. He informed me that it was against the rules of the camp, but that under the circumstances, and on this special occasion, he would grant me the permission, and an order was written so that the sentry near my tent should not interfere with me.

Once alone I lighted my lamp and sat down and pitched into work, and by five o'clock in the morning I had made nine sketches in connection with the Prince Imperial's untimely end.

My best horse was saddled, and my man, with my sketches in the regulation red envelope of the office, was only waiting for daylight to start and gallop to Landman's Drift to save the post, which he succeeded in doing, and my sketches were the only ones that appeared in London in connection with that sad event.

* * * * *

There are no doubt many reasons that may be advanced for the unfortunate scene which I am about to relate. The disaster at Isandlwana, as well as the many occasions on which the Zulus had given us a bad time, had no doubt had its effect on the minds of the men. Then, too, the darkness at night was very dense. How often have I, as well as others, on a pitch dark night, imagined I could see all sorts of things

moving. A tiny bush, a stump of a low palm, by steadfastly gazing at them, I could swear they were advancing on me. At last the nerves would be worked up to such a state, that a falling leaf or twig would be sufficient to turn doubt into certainty. In the present instance the rifle was clutched tight, pointed at the object, and in sheer desperation was fired by one of our pickets. That was enough, however regrettable, to startle the whole camp.

I was in my tent working in Zangweni camp when I heard a distant shot from our pickets, followed by another, and then two more. Instantly there was a commotion in our laager as every one rushed off to the tents to obtain fire-arms or came out of them ready for eventualities, and then a volley from the picket's supports was distinctly heard. At the same moment our alarm bugle sounded, the tents were struck, that is to say pulled down, and we all rushed to take up our position by the wagons. My boy gave me my helmet, greatcoat, and revolver, and then down came my tent.

Suddenly some of our officers imagined they could see a black mass approaching, and gave word to fire, and instantly a most terrific fire was going on all round the laager. For some ten minutes or so the most deafening noise of musketry was kept up; horses got loose and careered about amongst us. Our native allies appeared almost mad with fear, and the danger we ran of being shot by our men was horrible; as it was, five of our men were wounded by our own fire.

I went up to the edge of the laager, and looking over a wagon tried to see if I could catch sight of the enemy, and as I turned round I saw any number of our native allies with their muskets pointing straight towards me.

I need scarcely say I soon cleared out of that position. The brutes were firing all over the camp, and I could hear the bullets whiz through the air, from one point of the laager to the other. A more disgraceful scene I have never witnessed, more particularly when we realised that six rounds of canister were actually fired by the artillery, without having seen one single enemy. There was one redeeming feature in the whole affair, and that was that the pickets fell back and came into camp in Indian file, as steadily as on parade, although under a terrible fire from our own square. The bugle sounded the "Cease fire," but we kept under arms all night. It was a

fine sight to see the pickets march out again to take up their original positions.

* * * * *

When only a few marches from Ulundi, an order was issued that no private cart or carriage would be allowed to proceed beyond a certain point, and sure enough when we arrived there sentries had been so placed as to form what is known as "camp gates," through which everything had to pass.

Just before arriving at this position I saw one of the correspondent's carts being refused permission to go on. Suddenly an idea struck me. Lord Chelmsford was close by, so, approaching and saluting him in the most approved fashion, I asked him if he had any objection to my cart going forward. "You see, sir, I have my sketching materials and paper; besides, my bad knee compels me to ride in my carriage a good deal, and I shall never get on without it." "Well, Mr. Prior," he said, with a smile, "I have no objection, but I am not in command of this division; you must apply to General Newdigate—there he is, just over to your right."

"Oh, thank you, my lord," and I hastened over to him.

"Excuse me, General Newdigate, for troubling you, but do you mind my cart going forward? Lord Chelmsford says he has no objection if you have not." I said this all in one breath, and the General looked steadily at me and said, "Well, Mr. Prior, if Lord Chelmsford, who is Commander-in-Chief, has no objection, of course I cannot have."

"Then, sir, might I ask you to write on my card to let my cart pass?"

I shall never forget my feelings of gratitude, as well as delight, when he most kindly wrote on my paste-board, "Let Mr. Prior's cart pass. (Signed) E. A. Newdigate."

And as I rode on to see it go through the gates, my heart was thumping almost to bursting-point with pleasure, for now I should still have my tent and little comforts with me; once through those terrible gates, I knew I was all right.

The other men with private carts were very jealous, but also very generous, and did not complain. If they had, there was just the possibility that my permission might have been revoked.

Very shortly after this incident I came up with Surgeon-Major Brown—the surgeon who had attended to my poor knee. He looked remarkably hot. I called out to him, “Hullo, Major, you look jolly warm.”

He said “Right you are ; it’s a regular swelterer to-day.”

“How about a brandy-and-soda, Major ; or would you prefer whisky ? ”

“Now, Prior, I don’t like chaff on these occasions ; presently you will ask me if I like it iced.”

“I don’t know about ice, but I can give you a cool drink. Let us bear away a little to the left and get up to my cart, and we will both have one.”

I don’t think I ever saw a man’s face and eyes glisten with greater pleasure when he realised that I was not chaffing.

“Now then, John,” I said to my servant, “get me out a couple of sodas, and be sharp about it ! ” and very soon we drank each other’s health as though we had been in a club in Durban. I could not help smiling when I thought if Lord Chelmsford had seen us he would not have thought it so very strange that I wanted my cart to go on to carry my sketching materials.

When we were encamped at Upoka River, three clergymen joined us after a most perilous journey. On leaving Landman’s Drift they were told that the post, in charge of Basutos, was just ahead of them, and that they could easily catch them up and then all travel together. This they tried to do, but unfortunately Basutos are splendid riders and were travelling quickly.

These clergymen could discern them in the extreme distance, but failed to come up with them. The road being very rough at this point, and night coming on very quickly, they decided to bivouac and pass the night in a mealie field and wait for daylight.

They knee-haltered their horses, and then actually went to sleep. When they told us of this, and described the hills, the kraals they saw, and the river, we realised it was the exact spot where the Prince Imperial was killed.

Zulus had been seen by the Basuto post here, and how these three men escaped with their lives and arrived in camp safely is a marvel.

Talking of clergymen reminds me of a conversation I had with the Rev. G. Smith. We were riding together one morning, when he asked me, "Why do you carry a revolver, Prior?"

"Well," I said, "for a very good reason. If I unfortunately get into a tight corner I intend five shots for the enemy and the last one for myself, for I am never going to be taken alive by a Zulu."

"Oh do you think that very brave?" he smilingly asked in reply. "Do you really mean that? Would you really wantonly and with premeditation take that life which had been given you? Would it not be better to suffer a little agony, that you might have to bear if you fell into the hands of the enemy, than to take the life which God gave you?"

I had never looked at it in that light before, but so much was I impressed with his seriousness and the nice way in which he put the matter, that I in turn looked at him and said, "Smith, you are right, and I promise you that I will never take my own life."

He changed this conversation by telling me a little incident that had occurred to him during the fight at Rorke's Drift.

"I was going about," he said, "encouraging the men and handing out packets of cartridges to them, when I heard a Tommy, who was blazing away, using the most dreadful language, and as I gave him cartridges I touched him on the shoulder and said, 'My man, can't you fight without swearing? Think of your God Almighty.'"

"'Yes, sir, that's all right, but this is my God Almighty at present,' as he raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired."

It was at this camp that Cetewayo's indunas arrived with a message offering peace if we would return to Natal. Lord Chelmsford sent them back with his answer to the King, and they were to return again on a certain day, and as that day arrived it was quite evident that the General was very anxious, and he, with General Newdigate and General Marshall were looking over the edge of the laager anxiously, in hopes of catching sight of the King's messengers.

The night that the ambassadors were expected back was the darkest one I ever remember. It was almost impossible to see anything without a lantern, and this, of course we were not allowed to have. The going was pretty bad from one tent to another, but when one realises that all the oxen and horses

were inside the laager, one may very easily understand how very unpleasant it was. With hundreds of horses very often carelessly tethered to a peg, it is not strange that some would get loose during the night and stroll about amongst the tents, sometimes falling over the ropes; one actually did fall on a tent full of men and nearly suffocated some of them. The Staff at last issued a notice that if any of the horses got loose and came down near headquarter tents, they would be branded. Funnily enough one of the Staff Surgeon's horses did, and in the morning it was found going about camp with a large "V.R." and "P.O." branded on it, meaning it belonged to the Queen's Post Office. This brand would never come out.

We correspondents did our utmost to prevent our horses getting loose, but Francis Francis of the *Times* was unlucky, and we discovered one of his horses with a broad arrow nine inches long on one side, and on the other a "Crown," a "V.R.," and a large "P.O." So poor Francis had to ride about as though he had been enrolled into Her Majesty's Postal Service as a postman.

I was not at all surprised at the order, for it is certainly most disagreeable to have horses strolling about camp.

* * * * *

At last, after many weeks of hard marching, we arrived on the banks of the White Umvolozzi, where a large laager was formed of the wagons in a square formation; the oxen and horses were sent out to graze, with strong guards to see that they did not roam too far.

Ulundi (the capital kraal, or town, of King Cetewayo) was to be seen in the distance, and speculation was rife as to whether the enemy was going to fight or not.

Colonel Buller was ordered to reconnoitre the enemy's ground, and with Lord William Beresford and Sir Thomas Hesketh acting as aides-de-camp, crossed the White Umvolozzi with five hundred mounted men, and made what might be called an interesting and exciting reconnaissance.

The force was divided into two columns. They soon came up with some of the enemy, whom they pursued; but these were evidently acting as decoy ducks, for as Colonel Buller at the head of three hundred men chased them, and approached a donga, Sir Thomas Hesketh descried a large number of the enemy. Upon this the order was given to wheel about, for the

object of this reconnaissance was not to engage the enemy so much as to find out a good position where Lord Chelmsford could teach them a lesson, which he did on the following day.

On seeing our men fall back, the Zulus fired a tremendous volley into them, bringing four men out of their saddles.

It was quite evident that the old trick, which they so successfully played at Hlobane and other places, was again attempted by our wily enemy, and that but for the sharp look-out kept, Colonel Buller would have been entrapped by them.

The object for which they went out being satisfactory, a retreat was ordered under a heavy fire from the enemy. It was during this time that Lord William Beresford rode at a Zulu and ran his sword through his shield as well as the Zulu.

In the retreat Lord William Beresford, turning round, saw the four legs of a white horse kicking in the air, and realising at once that it belonged to one of our men, rode straight for it, to discover that his surmise was quite right, the horse had been shot and the man had fallen half-stunned.

“Get up!” he said to the man, and he seemed too dazed to answer; whereupon Lord William said, “If you don’t get up at once I will jump down and punch your head,” at which the man did rise, and at last Lord William succeeded in helping him on to the horse behind him, the man clutching Beresford round the waist, and so they galloped off.

All the time this was taking place the Zulus were firing all they knew from a donga close by; but I am happy to say that both got away safely. If any man ever won a V.C. Lord William certainly did on that occasion, and eventually he received it.

I remember when he came up to us that his back was one mass of blood. We all thought the man was wounded, but on close inspection we found that he had only damaged his nose in the fall from his horse.

As the cavalry returned from this reconnaissance they had to recross the White Umvolozi at a drift between two hills. Some Zulus had already occupied the position and were potting away at them as they crossed, while our infantry and artillery on our side pounded away at the enemy to prevent them if possible from coming down to closer quarters.

Those who watched the brave little band return, declared that it was touch and go whether they would get across safely. However, they succeeded in doing so, and just as Colonel Buller was going to return to camp to report to the General the result of his reconnaissance, some one informed him that a man was left behind, and turning round and looking through his glasses he did discover some one calmly standing on the enemy's side of the river sketching.

He called out to him to come back immediately—an order to which at first no attention was paid. Buller once more called out, ordering him to come across at once, or he would have him fetched and sent as a prisoner to the rear. This energetic little man, who had been sketching, turned out to be Charlie Fripp, of the *Graphic*, who had been making notes and sketches of the background for his drawing of the retreat of the cavalry, and he was most indignant at having been ordered about by any one.

Fripp came up to us, he was fairly foaming with rage. "The idea of being insulted and told I should be sent to the rear as a prisoner!" Then seeing Lord William Beresford, he rode over to him, and demanded to know who the man was who had spoken to him in that insulting manner, to which Lord William, who was still smothered in the blood of the man whose life he had saved, replied, "You know Mr. Fripp, quite well without my telling you."

"I don't," replied Fripp, "and I desire to know who it was." Unfortunately he spoke in such an offensive manner that at last Lord William said in a quiet sort of way, "If you don't speak more politely I'll pull you off your horse and thrash you."

This was quite enough for Fripp, who was a plucky little devil, and without more ado he jumped off his horse and squared up to Lord William, and was going for him in rare style, when, in self-defence, Beresford had to show fight. It was quite exciting for the moment that it lasted, and Fripp certainly showed that he could use his fists, but Lord William, who was a notorious bruiser and an all-round sportsman, did not want to hurt him, but with a straight one from the shoulder pushed rather than knocked him down.

Fripp was so excited and in such a rage that he "up with his foot" and kicked Lord William, whereupon it was mo-

amusing to see the latter dance round roaring with laughter and saying, "Oh, he's kicked me! Take him away; I'm frightened. He's kicked me!"

In another moment Archie Forbes and myself had caught hold of Fripp, who fought like a perfect little demon, and we tore his coat almost to pieces before we could get the best of him and haul him away to his tent.

It was certainly one of the most amusing incidents I remember out in those parts.

* * * * *

While our natives and servants were at the river getting water, the Zulus from a hillock on the opposite side would sometimes treat us to a pot-shot; but we had a couple of guns on our side, and we would give them a round of shell, shrapnel, or canister the moment any of them appeared. They used, however, to shriek out a number of defiant terms to us, saying we were a set of cowards and all very well behind a laager, but did not dare to go and meet them in the open, and that if we did they would annihilate us.

As the evening came on we saw a black column of Zulus streaming out of Ulundi and coming straight towards us. We heard afterwards that the witch-doctors had chosen out a few of their enemies, had tortured and killed them, and then smeared their blood on the lips of the warriors. Very often the heart would be cut out of the victim, divided into little pieces and given to the warriors to eat, and they had humbugged the fighting men into the belief that our bullets would be utterly harmless against them. The King then reviewed his army and told it to go out, kill and eat the white devils.

The black mass that we saw advancing was the centre column, composed of those famous fighting regiments that had been a terror to every other tribe in that part of Africa.

They had been worked up with the aid of native beer, to the height of fighting madness and enthusiasm, and now came on with the full intention of wiping us out of existence—very kind of them! Fortunately for us it turned out somewhat differently.

The chanting of their weird, wild, war-songs, and shouts of defiance coming over the hills and through the trees in the gloaming had a distinctly disagreeable effect, but as darkness

came on it was even more irritating to the nerves—it was nasty. I was walking up and down outside the laager with Archie Forbes, and trying to speak, but I found I could not. I even shook and my teeth chattered, perhaps you will say with fright—possibly it was so.

While watching the movements of this column we noticed two more immense black masses of Zulus coming on, one diverging to the left, the other to the right. These were the horns of the enemy, marching evidently with the intention of surrounding us. There was very little doubt left now that we were in for a big fight on the morrow.

Our laager was as large as the wagons placed close to each other would allow, but it was a pretty tight fit when all the cattle and horses were driven in, and there was not too much room for the headquarter Staff and those others who had to be inside.

Very shortly after the animals had been brought in a very curious commotion occurred amongst them. How it happened no one seemed to know. The animals no doubt took fright at something, for they started moving in a circle, quietly enough at first, but gradually increasing the pace until at last it became a mad rush, and the more we tried to stop them with the waving of hands and shouts the worse and madder they seemed to become. The animals' snortings and bellowings, and the awful dust they made rolling in clouds above them, turned the whole scene into a perfect pandemonium.

This awful stampede eventually wore itself out, but we all thought it was a most lucky thing the Zulus did not charge us at the same time, as the two episodes together might have been mighty unpleasant.

This disturbance was no sooner over than we had a much worse excitement and alarm, which proved to be quite a serious one.

It appeared that when the laager was formed trenches were dug all round some little distance in front of each face, in which the white troops were to pass the night, so as to be ready in case of an attack, and then still further out other trenches were made in which our native allies were to keep watch. Everything seemed to be in perfect order. I had just had my scratch sort of dinner, and was preparing to lie down under my cart, which was very snugly wedged in between two

wagons, when I heard a shot fired, and then another, and in a few moments a kind of whirlwind seemed to be coming towards us, which proved to be the native and white troops all mixed together dashing for the laager. Some clambered over the wagons, while others crawled underneath, in their mad endeavour and haste to get inside.

Under the wagon next to mine was General Sir Evelyn Wood, and in the mad rush of the troops he was rolled over and over, and his head coming in contact with the wheel of a wagon, was badly cut, and had to be surgically treated.

On investigation it turned out that one of the natives had seen what he thought to be an enemy lurking in the grass, and fired at him, and the rest of the natives, under the impression that the enemy was charging them, jumped up and fell back on the white troops; these in turn finding these naked devils right in amongst them, thought they were Zulus, and jumped up and also dashed for the laager.

It was certainly much to be regretted, but still more so that two hundred men of a certain regiment, which shall be nameless, actually left their rifles in the trench in their haste to get into camp. Had it been a genuine Zulu charge the whole affair might undoubtedly have turned out a disaster; as it was, the men were soon got in hand again, and returned to their posts. This time, I believe, the disposition of the troops was changed.

No further incident of importance took place that night, and we all slept in our clothes as well as we could under the circumstances, remembering that to-morrow was the test of arms—white versus black.

At daybreak the troops were drawn up in formation, and waiting for the order to advance. Buller's Horse crossed the river above and below our front, and found the country abandoned. Then the order was given for the whole force to go forward. As soon as we had crossed a drift, got clear of the bush, and arrived in the open, the troops were formed into a great square, with Artillery, Engineers, Hospital Corps, natives, &c., in the centre, the 17th Lancers bringing up the rear. We were then marched in the direction of Ulundi, and halted on the exact spot selected by Buller the day before, as a good fighting ground. It appeared afterwards that King Cetewayo had also instructed his army to draw us on to it, so there was nothing to complain about on either side, for both had chosen

the same position to try conclusions. Buller's Horse, on ahead, soon came in contact with the enemy, and opened the ball, and drew them on by steadily retreating fighting, until the Zulus, showing up very strong and determinedly on all sides, compelled him to canter back into the square, and thus enable the infantry to become engaged. On came the enemy the great fight commenced in earnest, and for the three-quarters of an hour that it lasted was as disagreeable as one could wish for.

The air seemed alive with the whistling of bullets and slugs and pieces of cooking-pot legs fired from elephant guns as they came banging in amongst us from all directions.

Our artillery practice was very fine, but it failed to daunt the Zulus. The rockets must have astonished them a good deal, for they did us. I saw one fired, and watched its triumphal progress amongst the enemy, until, catching a corner of a hut, it suddenly altered its direction, then, striking the ground, it once more deviated from its proper course, and came straight back at us, luckily missing our square by a quarter of a yard. My faith in rockets and tubes has considerably weakened since that occasion.

All those who were not actually engaged in fighting were ordered to keep as low down as possible, and I was doing so kneeling, when I discovered the Rev. Gore, who was Principal Chaplain to the Forces, was by my side.

"It's very warm, Prior," he said.

To which I readily agreed, as a bullet banged into one of our native allies close to us and rolled him over. By the way, it was very funny to see these men lying flat on the ground, with their shields covering their backs.

Another bullet killed a horse behind us and made him jump at least three feet in the air. Then all at once there appeared to be a perfect hailstorm of bullets in our direction, and we both wriggled on our knees, until one in particular passed between us with a nasty "phew," and my friend exclaimed, "My God, Prior, that was close."

This sort of thing went on all the time, until I heard the Zulus were said to be preparing to rush one of our corners.

Hastily asking one of the 2nd Dragoon Guards to hold my horse for a moment, I ran down to where the 21st and 58th Regiments were heavily engaged with some Zulus, said to be

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BATTLE OF ULUNDI, JULY 4, 1879.

6,000 strong and 30 deep, who were charging, and it was then that I heard Lord Chelmsford say to the troops, "Men, fire faster; can't you fire faster?" Now it is not my business to question the wisdom of this remark, but I cannot help contrasting it with Lord Wolseley's well-known order, "Fire slow, fire slow!"

However, the Zulus who charged this corner did not succeed in breaking it; the terrific fire of our men made them stagger, halt, and fall back a straggling mass, leaving a heap of dead and dying on the ground.

I have read since various statements as to how near the enemy got to our square, and it often stated that twenty to thirty paces was the closest, but I can say that I personally went out and reached the nearest one in nine paces, so their onslaught was pretty determined.

This charge and its failure seemed to decide the fate of Ulundi, for there was a mighty cheer as the enemy gave way, and the square opened to let out the Lancers and Buller's Horse, who burst like an avalanche on the broken enemy, the cavalry most thoroughly upholding its reputation for dash and daring not, unfortunately, without loss. Captain Wyatt Edgell was killed and two officers wounded, and there were many fatalities amongst the men. Many most interesting duels—sword versus spear—took place, in all cases to the advantage of the sword, although in some cases not without damage to the swordsman.

While watching this exciting charge, I put my hand in my pocket for my sketch-book, when I suddenly remembered I had left it in the holster of my saddle. I often used to carry it there, so as to have it ready at a moment's notice, which in this case was just about as stupid as a cavalryman having his sword fixed to his saddle as, if thrown and attacked by an enemy, he has naturally lost possession of his sword.

Rushing back to my horse, which was still being held by a trooper of the 2nd Dragoons, I noticed the flap of my holster was unfastened, and putting my hand inside I discovered, to my horror, it was not there. I felt again in my pockets, in my saddlebags, and my haversack, I searched on the ground; no, it was not there. The trooper said he knew nothing about it.

Now I had only been using it a short time before I ran down to the corner, so what could have become of it? The

more I thought, the more horrified I seemed to become at the awful loss, and at last I stood as though petrified. My sketch-book, containing all the notes I had made in the campaign and sketches of this battle, was gone, and in sheer despair I fell on the ground and burst into tears.

General Newdigate at that moment came by, and in his kindly way asked me what was the matter, but I was almost too miserable to be able to explain. At last I did so, and he patted me on the shoulder and told me to cheer up. At the same moment Sir William Gordon Cumming, who was by my side, said, "Never mind, Prior, here is my sketch-book; get up and run about, and make more sketches of costumes and background, and I will guarantee you will get out of your troubles."

This kindly thought and suggestion had this effect: I took the advice given, and soon obtained enough detail for my purposes. But what about my sketch-book? I offered twenty-five pounds for it in regimental orders, but I never saw it again.

Later on in my life I met a man who said he knew all about it, and actually knew the man who had it, but he had given his word of honour to keep the secret, and he would not break it. He said the man who had it was too ashamed to return it. I said, "Nonsense, he could have posted it without any name."

I felt such contempt for any man who would lend himself to such contemptible tricks that I never spoke to this one again. All worry, however, with regard to my book was soon dissipated, for by this time I had wandered up to the corner of the square, facing Ulundi, when I heard the deep voice of Forbes as he called out, "Come on, Prior, for Ulundi; ride for it, old chap!" and digging spurs into my horse it soon became a race between literature and art.

He was a great rider, and well mounted, and he beat me by a neck.

At the entrance of the King's kraal, which was already in flames, we met Lord William Beresford, who had been the first to arrive in the kraal, and was nicknamed "Ulundi Beresford" in consequence. The capital of Zululand, in which many a horrible and ghastly deed of fetishism had been perpetrated, was indeed a very large village, and at the corner we had made for stood the King's palace, burning furiously.

Mr. Drummond had joined us, and it was suggested that we should go inside and have a look at Cetewayo's palace.

At the entrance we saw several large baskets of Mabal corn, of which horses and cattle generally were exceedingly fond; it was a kind of millet which the natives ground into flour for porridge; and here we left our horses to enjoy themselves, while we entered on foot.

Having gone through a gateway, we found ourselves in a large courtyard, at the opposite end of which was a large door leading into another courtyard, then another door and another courtyard.

Having traversed these three, we found ourselves fairly in amongst the flames of the King's palace, and while the others proceeded to one corner I ran down a long passage to the right to obtain a sketch.

I had flames on three sides of me, but I cared not. I was so delighted to be able to obtain a drawing of this savage King's residence, that I only thought of the work, and did not know that Forbes and Beresford had left me to it.

I may have been some four or five minutes sketching, when I saw some black object pop up above the palisade on my left. What can it be? I thought to myself, and clambering up, I actually saw a real live Zulu, with spears and shield. Then I suddenly took in the situation: I was alone with fire on three sides of me and the Zulu running to get round the courtyards, so as, if possible, to cut off my retreat.

With sketch-book in one hand and pencil in the other, I started on a run for my life. Great Scot! how I ran to try and get out of this frightful trap.

As I tore through the first courtyard I saw no one, and through the second I saw no one, but as I entered the third and turned my head I saw the Zulu turn the corner of the first courtyard, racing for me as hard as he could.

My God, I thought, I am lost! The fact that I had a revolver by my side, and might have made a stand, never entered my head. I simply ran for dear life, and as I emerged into the open, by everything that is holy, there was my horse still eating out of the basket.

Springing on his back, and digging my spurs in, he made a wild leap forward, and as I dug my spurs more and more into

him, so he went for all he was worth. I had not bothered about gathering up reins, but simply guided him by pulling his head round by the mane and his ears. In his wild career he put his feet in the reins and tore them asunder, fortunately without stumbling or throwing me, for this would have meant the end of the rider.

I had had a shock, for, in the first place, I did not know Forbes and the others had left me alone, and, secondly, I never thought for a moment that any Zulu was hardy enough to remain in the kraal, knowing we were destroying it, so I may perhaps be excused if I say I continued my mad gallop until I came up with our troops once more.

Meeting Sir William Gordon Cumming, I told him of my little escapade, when he replied, "By Jove! I wonder where Forbes and Beresford are? Let us return and see if we can find them, and go for that Zulu," and to my utter astonishment I started back with him full of pluck and fight.

We did not enter the kraal at the same point, but skirted round it. Presently we came across a jolly nice hut, and Cummings said, "There ought to be something in this place," and he crawled in while I held his horse, and he came out with some nice spears and curiosities. At the next hut I went in, and while there I heard him calling, "Come out of that, Prior; we had better get away. There have been three or four bullets pass me; there are evidently a lot of Zulus still about."

So we had to give up our search and quietly return to the square without having seen any of my three former companions.

The order was then given for the square to return to our laager, and on the road I met Forbes and Lord Beresford, who told me that they had got separated in the burning kraal from Drummond, and they had not seen him since, and I regret to say that he evidently fell a victim to a Zulu spear or gun, for he was never seen again.

Safe in the laager, I was chatting with a commissariat officer when a captain who had been on picket duty outside Ulundi came in. Turning to me he said, "You had a lucky escape this morning." "Yes," I said, "a Zulu chased me."

"There were five," he said, "for I saw them, and I thought that they would have you, but you were too nippy in getting

on to your pony. They threw several assegais at you, but luckily missed you. I was too far off to be of any use, and my troopers could not get to you in time, but by Jove, you did get away smartly!"

It appeared in explanation later on that Forbes thought I had gone further into Ulundi, and returned for his horse, and told my servant, who was holding him, to follow him and bring my animal along with him, and he would pick me up at the other end of the kraal. But my man said, "No, sir, my master left his horse here and will come back and expect to find it;" but Forbes felt so sure that I had left that he made my man follow him to go in search of me.

Great Heavens! how lucky it was that my good man George left my pony eating that Mobala corn.

I was chatting with some men about the fight and the day's work, when Forbes called me on one side to tell me he was going to ride down country for Durban as hard as he could, and was going to start almost immediately. If I had a sketch of the fight ready he would take it with him and post it for me, and it would be the first in London.

Getting hold of a large sheet of paper from my cart, I threw myself on the ground, and in half an hour had a rough sketch ready. Forbes's great ride is so well known, even in these days, that it is not necessary for me to relate it. His object was that his account should be the first to reach England, and, going over to the General, he had offered to carry information of the success of the battle round via Durban to General Crealock, who was then still marching on the Coast route.

Lord Chelmsford readily accepted the offer, and furnished him with a fresh horse and an escort of six Lancers, thus turning Forbes into a despatch-rider with all the attendant privileges. As he left, I and a few others gave him a cheer and a God-speed, and away he went on his memorable ride, which was a distinctly risky one for the first eight or ten miles, but after that it was comparatively easy going. Posts and forts had been established every ten or fifteen miles by our column as we advanced, and at each of these, as Forbes arrived, he was furnished with a fresh horse and escort of six men, and a jolly good meal and drink. This went on until he arrived at Landman's Drift. Then he continued alone to Ladysmith, where he obtained the loan of a buggy and pair of

horses, with a promise that he would pay £100 if he damaged either.

Arrived in Maritzburg, he took post cart and rail for Durban, where he arrived in record time, very much done up. But he telegraphed his account and posted my sketch, which arrived and was published in the *Illustrated London News* a clear week ahead of any other.

The battle took place on the morning of Friday, June 4th, Forbes leaving in the afternoon; and no sooner had he departed than I made up my mind I would rush down country as fast as possible and make my sketches of all I had seen in the last few days quietly in Durban, and if possible take them with me in the next steamer for England. I left on the following morning. My horses having had a long rest and good feeding, were in great fettle, and we travelled along at quite a good pace, and everything on the road went merrily.

Unfortunately, on one or two occasions I made bad calculations about distances, and got benighted twice. On the second occasion it was particularly unfortunate, as night was fast falling, and I knew by the contour of the country that I was close to where the Prince Imperial was killed.

I was going along thinking of that horrible catastrophe, when I suddenly realised that I was off the road, and on consultation with my man he informed me that the horses were also rather done up. It was so dark that I could not see the road, and I was unwilling to strike a light for fear of attracting attention from any lurking Zulu who might be about, for this spot seemed to strike terror into me. I dismounted and felt with my feet as well as my hands for some distance to the left, and then went over to the right of the cart. Suddenly coming up with some deep ruts, I knew I had struck the road again as a bit of good luck. I then whispered to my man to take one of the horses out of the cart and ride on with me to the next post.

"No," he said, "you go on, sir, and I will bring the cart on later."

"Not a bit of it, George. You do as I tell you. You have no revolver, and if by any chance we are attacked at this miserable spot, I am going to stand by you."

"Never mind, sir," he continued, "you go on and I will bring the cart in."

This indomitable pluck shamed me, and I said, "Very well, then, let the horse rest, and we will go in half an hour," and as good luck would have it, the horses seemed to muster up fresh pluck, as though they felt there was a good feed waiting for them at the camp, and then we started off again quite gaily.

Even then, however, I did not reach the post at Itelezi until one o'clock in the morning, and was more than delighted when I heard the challenge of the sentry, for every now and then I imagined I could see what I thought was the form of a man advancing on us, and I tried to pierce the darkness in search of possible danger.

On arriving at camp, we found two of the officers had been sitting up rather late playing cards. Hearing me arrive, they turned out to welcome me, and supper, a good drink, and a comfortable bed soon made me forget the troubles of the last few hours.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOER WAR. 1881

EXTRACT from the Queen's Speech of January, 1881: "A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of my authority."

On reading the above I felt certain I should very soon receive my marching orders, and sure enough, on arriving at the office, I was met by Mr. Ingram, who, in his usual impulsive style, said, "I want you to go out to the Transvaal at once." Then he wrote a good round cheque for expenses, gave me a handshake, and bade me goodbye. These were all the instructions I received.

Not many hours elapsed before I found myself once more on board the s.s. *Nubian*, bound for South Africa.

Strolling about the deck I discovered, to my great delight, that General Sir Evelyn Wood was on board, accompanied by a small Staff, consisting of Major Fraser, Captain Maude, and Captain Thornburgh Cropper. The latter, acting as aide-de-camp, was a most jovial fellow, and we were soon the best of friends. Sir Evelyn was going out in command of strong reinforcements for Natal.

Among the passengers were two officers of the 58th, mad for the fray, Captain Morris and Lieutenant Jopp—or little Jopp, as we used to call him. Certainly he was very short and very young, and looked like a boy fresh from school, but he was keen as mustard.

These two, somehow or other on our arrival at Durban, managed to get the much-coveted seats in the post cart and dashed off to the front. On their arrival they met with varying luck, for Captain Morris joined his regiment just in time to have a go-in at Laing's Nek fight and receive a bullet through

his chest, whereas Jopp was there in the nick of time to take charge of his company and bring it out of action (the two other officers having been killed). This was a piece of good fortune, for he was very soon appointed Captain, years before his time would have arrived in the ordinary way.

When I went to see poor Morris in hospital I expected to hear him curse his luck, but instead of that he was quite pleased. He had arrived in time to join his men, he had fought with them and only been wounded. "What more could I wish for?" he said. "I am all right, and the doctor says I may get over it." He did.

I was also keen to get to the front as soon as possible, but I found it impossible to obtain a seat in the post cart, for the Government had taken up every one for weeks to come, and although I tried my hardest, I was always met with the stereotyped reply, "Am very sorry, but officers must be pushed ahead first." I waited two days in vain hopes, then, finding there was no other way for me but to ride to Newcastle, a distance of some two hundred miles, I obtained horses and a servant and started from Maritzburg just one day after Captain Cropper left with his little crew.

I had started out riding a day after them, yet I caught them up quite easily at Currie's Post, and could not help chuckling to myself, for when they departed from Maritzburg they laughed at me, saying, "Well, Prior, I suppose we shall see you at the front some day," and here had I actually come up with them in the first hundred miles.

On their arrival at Ladysmith they had already lost £250 worth of horses, besides which the cart had come to grief, the off hind wheel had smashed to pieces, and they had to send for a wagon to fetch in the remains. At this point Cropper brought a fresh turn-out and a span of horses, and by the time he arrived at the front must have spent a small fortune on horse flesh.

No one in England has any idea what travelling meant and still means in South Africa, the trouble with horses is so great. You are constantly in fear that they may drink water which is not good for them, and if they look tired and cannot get on you feel sure they have horse-sickness, which is dreadfully prevalent. Then one casts a shoe, and there is no farrier to replace or see to it for miles; while at the different stables where

you put up, stealing, or "jumping" as it is called, is prevalent, and you find a piece of harness gone which you cannot do without. These, to say nothing of the cost of feeding the animals (each horse costing altogether about fifteen shillings a day) are only a few of your troubles.

When next I saw Cropper he assured me he had never enjoyed a drive in his life like it. "Such fun, Prior—sometimes the horses dragged us, sometimes we dragged them. Oh yes, glorious fun!"

I was nearing the little town, and riding along at a pretty good pace, when I saw in the distance a horseman, and as he came near I found it was General Sir Evelyn Wood, soldier to the backbone, dapper, smart, brisk, and full of energy and go, with just a couple of men as escort.

He greeted me in that cheery style of his. "Hullo, Prior, where are you going to, and why are you riding so hard?"

"Well, sir," I said, "I am anxious to get to the front and see what is going on."

"You need not be in any hurry," he replied; "I have just left Colonel Colley, who has given me his word of honour that he will not move out of camp until I return, and I am just going down to hurry up the troops who are now on the road. Nothing will take place until I return, so you may take it easily."

With a cheery goodbye away he went, while I proceeded more leisurely to the town.

I intended going to the camp, which was some miles still ahead, but when my servant took the horses into the stables another horse kicked mine and lamed him for the time being, so I decided to stop at the hotel for the night.

I was in bed asleep when my man came into the room quite excitedly, saying that firing was distinctly heard on ahead. It was still dark, but jumping out and going to the window I could hear the low rumble of rifle-fire. Ordering my horse to be saddled at once, kick or no kick, I was soon in my clothes and the saddle, for I was determined to find out what was going on, and although the animal certainly showed signs of lameness he warmed to his work and took me along at a great pace. I arrived on a hill close to Majuba, just in time to see the remains of the troops coming down from the summit in a hasty retreat.

I am not going to discuss the why and wherefore of that terrible calamity to the British arms, more particularly as the man who gave his word to Sir Evelyn Wood that he would not move out of camp during his absence, and had then organised this expedition, died on the summit.

My friend John Cameron was correspondent to the *Standard* in those days, and I propose to give a very slight description of his experiences on the top of Majuba during that night and early morning. He says :—

“ Major-General Sir George Colley, with a force of seven hundred men, consisting of some of the 58th Regiment, 60th Rifles, 92nd Gordon Highlanders, and Naval Brigade, started from the camp at Mount Prospect late on Saturday night. The destination was kept a profound secret; each man carried with him three days’ provisions and eighty rounds of ammunition.

“ General Colley’s expectation seems to have been that after taking Majuba Hill his force would have been capable of holding it for two or three days, when the reinforcements under General Sir Evelyn Wood were expected to arrive, and assault would then have been delivered on Laing’s Nek; but the expectation was not realised.

“ Majuba Hill was some three or four miles from the British camp. The secret was out, and the troops made their way cautiously in the darkness to the back of the mountains to avoid observation by the Boers.

“ The ascent was terribly difficult. The men, burdened with rifles and haversacks, had often to crawl on hands and knees, pulling themselves up by the aid of such brushwood or stumps as were rooted in the crevices of the rocks, but they reached the top successfully long before daybreak.

“ The top of the mountain at a height of over 2,000 feet was found to consist of a large basin or plateau, and the bulk of the force could lie easily out of sight on the ground. The two companies of Highlanders had been left at the foot of the hill and another force on a ridge to keep open communication with the camp.

“ The Naval Brigade endeavoured to hoist a Gatling gun, but found it an impossible task.

“ The enemy’s principal laager was about 2,000 yards distant.

“ At sunrise the Boers were to be seen moving in long lines. About an hour later a party of mounted vedettes were seen trotting out towards the hill. As they approached our outlying pickets fired upon them. The sound of rifles was heard at the Dutch laager, and the whole scene was changed as if by magic.

“ In place of a few scattered figures, swarms of men appeared on the scene. Some rushed to their horses, others to the wagons, and the work of inspanning the oxen and preparing for instant retreat began at once, but when the first panic abated it could be seen that some person in authority had taken the command.

“ The greater portion of the Boers then began to move forward, with the evident intention of attacking us. About seven o'clock they opened fire, and the bullets whistled thickly over the plateau. Our men were all perfectly cool and confident, and I do not think that the possibility of the position being carried by storm ever occurred to any one.

“ From seven to eleven the Boers, lying all round the hill, mostly behind rocks, maintained a constant fire. Their shooting was wonderfully accurate. The stones behind which our men in the front line were lying were hit by almost every shot. Exposed to such shooting as this there was no need to tell the men to keep well under cover. Twenty of the 92nd, under Lieutenant Hamilton, held the point which was the most threatened by the Boers, and nothing could exceed the steadiness of these Highlanders. They kept well under cover, and although they fired but seldom they killed eight or ten of the Boers who showed themselves for a moment in the open.

“ So far our position appeared quite safe, our casualties were few, but unimportant, and all were perfectly confident of the result.

“ Between twelve and one the fire slackened, and it seemed as if the Boers were drawing off. This, however, as we afterwards learnt, was not the case; the enemy had been very strongly reinforcing his fighting line in preparation for an assault, and shortly after one o'clock a terrific fire broke forth from the right lower slopes of the hill.

“ A tremendous rush was simultaneously made by the enemy. Our advanced line was at once nearly all shot or driven in upon our main position. This may be described as



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an oblong basin on the top of the hill. It was about two hundred yards long by fifty broad.

“Our whole force now lined the rim of the basin, and fixed bayonets to repel the assailants. The Boers, with shouts of triumph, swarmed up the sides of the hill and made several desperate attempts to carry the position with a rush. After each charge the firing nearly ceased, but broke out again with renewed vigour, and the air seemed heavy with bullets. The troops did their duty well and steadily, and, trying as was the occasion, fought with great coolness, encouraged by their officers.

“At last the Boers, who had gathered near the edge of the slope, made a tremendous rush at a point beyond that at which they had before been attacking, and where the numbers of the defenders were comparatively small. They burst through the defenders, charged in over the edge of the basin, and our position was lost.

“The main line of our men, their flank turned, and taken in reverse, made a rush along the plateau to endeavour to form a rally, but it was useless. With fierce shouts and a storm of bullets the Boers poured in, there was a wild rush, with the enemy close behind. The roar of fire, the whistling of the bullets, the yells of the enemy, made a din which seemed infernal. Men were falling all round, there was no resistance, no halt, it was a fight for life.

“At this moment I was knocked down by the rush and trampled on, and when I came to my senses the Boers were firing over me at the retreating troops, who were rushing down the hill.

“Upon trying to rise I was taken prisoner. On the hill I found the body of General Colley, shot through the head. I also saw Captain Singleton of the 92nd, severely wounded, Lieutenant Hamilton of the 92nd slightly, Dr. Lanton severely, Captain Morris severely, and Miller also severely. Captain Maude was killed.

“I had a conversation with the Boer General, and induced him to grant me a pass to go into the British camp and bring out succour for the wounded. They were lying thickly, both on the plateau and everywhere on the descent of the hill. The Boers were very civil, though they took the few articles I had about me. Talking with me they described the victory

due, not to their arms or bravery, but to the righteousness of their cause. As to the completeness of their victory there can be no question. They carried by sheer pluck and fighting a position which our General himself considered impregnable. Even now I can hardly understand how it was done, so sudden was the rush, so instantaneous the change from what we regarded as perfect safety to imminent peril.

"It cannot be denied that the capture of Majuba Hill is an exploit of which any troops in the world might be proud.

"The body of Sir George Colley was given up by the Boers, and was buried with military honours in the British camp at Mount Prospect; a burying party of our soldiers was allowed to go up and inter the British dead, about eighty in number, on the ground where they fell.

"Other parties brought in the wounded, of whom there were one hundred and twenty-two."

* * * * *

Mr. Cameron, having been released as a prisoner on parole, returned to the Boer camp after getting assistance for the British wounded.

He told me personally that he had had several narrow escapes, but when at last he was forced to retreat, in rushing down the hill he missed his footing and fell into space, landing on the top of a tree, where, fortunately, he was caught in the branches, and eventually slid to the bottom, only to be taken prisoner by the Boers, as related above.

I heard many extraordinary tales as to the lucky escapes that the men had in retreating. One was told by a man of the 92nd Highlanders. It appeared that when racing downhill, a Boer suddenly called out, in rare good Scotch, "Halt, there, Jock, ye had better stop, ye canna get awa," with which he brought his rifle up to the shoulder.

"That be darned," said the man of the 92nd, "I'll have a jolly good try," and was still running when he heard the ping of a bullet. "Hang the fellow, he's fired!" said he, and swinging round he in turn brought his rifle to the shoulder, took steady aim, fired, and brought down his quarry.

I also heard a sailor say, later on, that it took them all night to clamber to the top of Majuba, but they seemed to come down in two strides.

Major McGregor assured me that three times the men of

the 92nd Regiment begged to be allowed to charge the Boers on the hill, but were not allowed to do so by General Colley.

Many men, as well as Cameron, told me that when the game seemed to be up General Colley approached the edge of the hill, revolver in one hand a large handkerchief in the other, and while waving it as a flag of truce he received the fatal bullet in his forehead.

Dear old Cameron was not much of an artist, but he gave me a lot of notes and rough sketches of the fight, which I was able to work up under his guidance and forward to England.

Having spent the whole day in collecting materials, and made all the sketches I could in connection with this disaster, I started on my way back to Newcastle, but soon after starting discovered a little wayside inn, or store, called Mount Pleasant, within a mile of Mount Prospect where the camp was.

Dismounting and entering I found this corrugated iron-roofed house consisted of a large room with mud floor, papered walls, at least with such paper as remained on them, a few cheap framed oleographs, and a large deal table in the centre with half a dozen broken-down chairs. The proprietor, when interviewed, said he had a little bedroom which he could let me have, and which led out of the large dining-room. Popping my head in I certainly discovered it contained a bed, with furniture of questionable cleanliness and a box to act as washing-stand, on which was a cracked bowl. The man slept in the kitchen and his cook was a Zulu, so altogether the whole thing did not give one the impression of being a very cheery place to stop at. - However, I should be close to camp, with a roof over my head and a stable for my horse.

I therefore determined to return there on the following day with my luggage.

On Sunday, March 6th, about half past-nine, I was at work in the store when I was told that the General was coming along from Newcastle, and going to the door I saw that he was riding hard towards me.

“Good-morning, General.”

“Good-morning, Mr. Prior,” was the reply. “Just come this way a moment,” he said quietly, “I want to speak to you.” Whereupon he began rather hurriedly to tell me that he was on his way to have an interview with General Joubert

and other Transvaal representatives, and that it would take place in a tent not far from the base of Majuba. "And if you like to come along you might be able perhaps to make some sketches, it being understood, however, that you will not do anything likely to offend the Boers."

"You may trust me, Sir Evelyn," I replied, with a smile, at which he seemed quite pleased, and suggested I should proceed along the high-road and if necessary wave my handkerchief as a flag of truce.

He did not wish me to follow him then, as he wanted to go first of all to the camp.

I soon had my horse saddled, and cantered along the high-road as far as I thought was wise, until I found myself at the base of the mountain where the disaster to our troops had taken place only a week before, but I could not see the tents. So I halted, dismounted, and allowed my horse to graze, expecting the General to come up at any moment from the camp.

In about a quarter of an hour I saw some horsemen passing along a road about a mile distant, parallel with the one I was on, and who with the aid of my glass I made out to be the General, a white flag being held by one of his escort.

I started at a gallop with the intention of joining him, but I very soon had to pull up, for in front of me was a horrible drift, which the Boers had made as dangerous and difficult as possible for us to cross, and the river, owing to the heavy rains, was running very swiftly.

I felt horribly lonely at that moment. There were two roads open to me. I must either go back round through the camp, a distance which would make me too late for the meeting, or I must get across this river somehow or other.

Every time I endeavoured to get my horse to face it he refused. I wandered up and down the bank until at last I espied what I thought was a likely spot, and once more putting my horse at it with the aid of spurs I managed to get him to attempt the crossing. Fortunately I had chosen a spot with a stone bottom, and with his head upstream and steady work we succeeded in getting across to the other side.

I still, however, had a difficulty, for the bank was frightfully steep. Dismounting I unwound the halter, and clambering up the bank with the aid of roots and bushes I arrived at the

top, then hauling on the halter with words of encouragement to the horse he made many efforts, and at last succeeded in getting up, but rolling over on the top just as he did so, for he had missed his last footing.

At last I got up with the General as he was being received by the Boers.

“Come here, Mr. Prior”—and I was introduced to General Joubert and several commandants who had come with him from their camp, and then they all went inside the tent to confer and arrange for a treaty or armistice which was to last for eight days.

It was not long before I was invited to go in, and informed that if I liked I might make a sketch.

I found General Wood seated at a table, with Major Fraser on his right, Captain Cropper, with Mr. Foster acting as interpreter standing by his side. In front was General Joubert, a rough, uncouth-looking Boer, who nevertheless had a pleasing face almost entirely shrouded in a black and white beard and moustache. His unkempt hair hung down almost to his shoulders, he wore a flannel shirt, no tie, a loose coat, and baggy trousers. His companions, Commandants Uys, C. J. Joubert, and C. S. Fouché were dressed about the same, although their heads were a little more carefully looked after and their hands a little cleaner.

I was then asked if I would mind riding over to where Mr. Cameron and the Rev. Mr. Ritchie were waiting some four hundred yards away, and invite them to come to the tent.

On my return I found General and Staff and Boers feasting on all the good things that this forsaken country could provide, and toasting each other with champagne, and I am delighted to say we were invited to join in the feast.

Mr. Cameron was then informed what had taken place, and was asked to telegraph the news to England. Soon after the interview broke up and we separated, each to his own camp.

The terms were as follows:—

We mutually agreed to a cessation of hostilities for eight days, both parties promising not to make any forward movement from their present positions.

General Wood was free to send in eight days' provisions, but no ammunition, to each of the Transvaal garrisons, and the

Boer officers undertook to pass the provisions to such garrisons.

At the end of eight days it was found necessary to prolong the armistice four days more, to give time for Mr. Paul Kruger to arrive from Rustenberg.

On March 21st the great conference between General Sir Evelyn Wood, Mr. Brand (President of the Orange Free State), Mr. Paul Kruger (Vice-President of the Transvaal), and Generals P. J. Joubert and Pretorius, took place at O'Neill's Farm, at the base of Majuba Hill, about two miles from the Prospect Camp.

General Wood had all through been in telegraphic communication with the home Government, and had received the most minute instructions, but I know what the feelings of the troops and correspondents were. The message they wanted was, "Cut the wires," *i.e.*, have an imaginary accident to the telegraphic cable, cut yourself adrift from the vacillating Home Government, and fight the enemy with the troops that have been landed and hurried up country. The General had more than enough for the purpose, and had the enemy been taught a lesson then, the cruel war of 1899, which cost so many thousands of lives and over two hundred and fifty millions of money, would never have been necessary.

I was once bold enough to say to Sir Evelyn that there was a time when I was horrified at his throwing down the sword and taking up the pen, to which he immediately replied, "I am a soldier, Mr. Prior, and a soldier's first duty is to obey."

Of course this may sound a very wild suggestion on my part, but never mind one way or the other—one thing is certain, the conference did take place, and ended by peace being declared and signed in terms said to be equally convenient and honourable to the British Government and the Dutch community of the Transvaal; and another thing is certain, we had in consequence the last Boer War.

While the great men were inside the house discussing the terms of this regrettable peace, there was a small army of correspondents and artists outside anxiously waiting, each in hopes of being the first to obtain the news that all was over. They were lounging and lying about on the grass with their horses saddled and bridled ready to race to the telegraph office in camp.

Now, as I have mentioned before, Captain Thornburgh Cropper, the General's aide-de-camp, and I were very great friends, and as he occasionally came out of the house to have a chat and smoke he kept me carefully informed as to how matters were going on inside.

Another great friend of mine was Jack Cameron, correspondent of the *Standard*. I was anxious to do him a good turn if I could, and it occurred to me that now was a good chance, so I said, "Cropper, you might let me know when they really are signing, or going to sign," and he promised to do so. Then I said to Cameron, "Look here, old chap, you get your horse ready and send it round the corner of that hill, but be careful that the other fellows don't suspect anything, for as soon as General Wood and Kruger start signing the terms of peace Cropper is coming out to tell me, and when you see me raise my helmet, that is the signal for you to gallop into camp and wire the news off. Shortly afterwards Cropper came out, and carelessly whispered to me, "It's all over, Prior, they have signed."

I simply had to give the prearranged signal to Cameron, and he was off like a shot at a full gallop for the camp telegraph-office.

It must have been twenty minutes to half an hour later that the General came out on the verandah of O'Neill's Farm, and calling the members of the Press around him, said, "Gentlemen, I have pleasure in announcing to you that President Kruger, General Joubert, and Mr. Brand, and other delegates representing the Boer nation, and myself, have signed the terms of peace, but I warn you that the wire to England is closed to all communication until my despatch has gone. I could not help smiling to myself, for I knew well enough that long ere this Cameron's news was on the way to England, and it was always a puzzle to those in power that the news appeared in a special edition of the *Standard* before the British Government had the information—possibly they knew later on.

Almost while the General was speaking the idea flashed into my mind that I would ride into the Boer camp and announce "peace" myself to them.

Mr. Brand had already started in a carriage and pair for that purpose—I determined to precede him.

Seeing General Joubert coming from the house, I succeeded in making him understand I would like to pay a visit to the

Boer camp, and begged him to give me a pass in case I should be stopped by any of his vedettes or sentries. After thinking the matter over for a moment, he drew out his note-book, wrote something on one of the leaves, tore it out, and presented it to me with a smile and shake of the hand. Full of delight I went over to my servant.

"George," I said, "take two horses leisurely down into the bed of the river, as though you are going to give them a drink, then continue along until you get out of sight of O'Neill's Farm and any one who might be about, as I do not wish any of the correspondents to guess what I intend doing, and then wait for me."

He carried out his instructions splendidly, and I pretended to walk back to the camp, instead of which I popped round the corner of a hill, then down to the bank of the river until I found horses and servant.

"I am going to ride for the Boer camp; if you like to come with me, you can, if not, you can stay behind."

"Where you go, sir, I will go."

"All right, and now for it;" and putting our horses at a good hard gallop away we went.

Just as I arrived at the base of Laing's Nek I saw the carriage (an American spider) with President Brand seated in it.

"Stop, Mr. Prior," he said, "it is not safe for you to go on like that," but with a wave of the hand and "Goodbye, sir," I simply put my horse at a still madder gallop, and drawing out my handkerchief waved it as a flag of truce to the Boers, who were collected on the top of the Nek.

As soon as I could speak I announced to all those around me that peace had been declared and signed.

Then one man stepped out from the others, saying, "We don't want peace, we want to fight. Bring over the whole British army and we will treat it in the same way as we have the last men."

This was a Scotsman, and pushing him on one side I said, "I am not speaking to you, I am speaking to the Boer nation. Mr. Brand is just behind, and will be here in a minute and announce it officially." I am happy to say that those Boers to whom I did talk behaved with much more dignity and respect than that wretched Scottish renegade.

In a few minutes Mr. Brand, President of the Orange Free State, acting on behalf of the Boer delegates, arrived and announced that peace had been settled and signed. I then approached and apologised for my apparent rudeness in riding ahead of him, saying I had done so with the intention of sketching what I looked upon as an important historical event—his arrival on the top of the Nek. This seemed to tickle him, for he ordered the “cornet” or captain of his escort to take charge of me and see that I was well looked after.

The camp, formed of wagons in laager fashion with tents inside, was about three hundred yards beyond the Nek, and as soon as I arrived in it I was surrounded by a most interested crowd, old and young, armed to the teeth, but though it was getting dark I was allowed to wander about and sketch what I liked. I found them rather rough and noisy, but never once received the smallest insult.

Near President Brand’s tent I saw a Boer mounted on the top of a wagon in the act of untying the Transvaal Republican flag (which was blue, white and red) from a flagstaff, then reversing the order so that the red was uppermost he waved it about his head with yells and shouts, which were answered by tremendous bursts of shouting and cheers from the assembled Boers, but with what significance I could not find out. It was by this time quite dark. Continuing my search for sketches I came upon quite a different kind of scene—a religious thanksgiving service for peace was just being solemnised. Here also I was allowed to sketch this simple act of Puritan worship, which recalled to me the history of the Scottish Covenanters in their severe struggle for freedom.

The minister, dressed in a frock-coat, stood with a hymn-book in his hand, in front of a tent, and on a commissariat box two candles were burning, stuck in Bass’s beer bottles for want of proper candlesticks, to give light to read by. A hymn was given out, and then the singing by the crowd of grim-looking, slovenly, dirty, and illiterate Boers was, from a fine art point of view, far more grotesque than impressive. Some prayers followed and then another hymn. But now I cleared off.

Strolling back towards Mr. Brand’s tent I was accosted by General Joubert, who had by this time arrived in camp with

President Kruger, and taking me by the arm he very kindly led me into a tent next his, which he informed me had been his wife's when she was in camp with him and that he hoped I would make myself as comfortable as I could for the night.

He sent me in a good dinner, and came in with an excellent bottle of champagne under his arm, which he opened with his own hands and insisted on my accepting, saying, "This is the sort of thing that will cheer you up."

Rising early next morning I went out to see if I could get a sketch of the whole of the Boer camp, but I found it was all on the move, cattle being inspanned or yoked to the wagons, and every one was very busy packing up. I also heard that a large number of Boers and their families had been trekking away during the whole of the night. Personally I cannot help thinking that this was done on purpose that we should not know how many of them had been there in camp.

There were very few, if any, photographers or artists in the rural part of the Transvaal, and having made rather a good sketch of one of the Boers, I was absolutely beset by a crowd of them all wanting me to draw their portraits. They were perfectly childish in their anxiety. "It's my turn next," "I am second," or "I am third," and so on. When I had done fifteen or twenty portraits I had to give up this entertainment.

Most of the Dutch wives were dressed in black, and many of them as well as the daughters looked quite jolly and pretty in their print dresses, though I must confess that a few whale-bones would have added very much to the smartness of their figures.

I was engaged sketching some of the pretty ones with the men around shrieking with laughter, when I saw horsemen coming down from Majuba Hill, and as they came nearer I found it was General Wood and his Staff. On seeing me he appeared considerably surprised. "Hullo, Mr. Prior, how did you get here?" "Get here, sir! why I slept here last night and have made any number of interesting sketches." He could not help looking astonished when I told him of all my experiences.

The word was then passed round that the whole of the Boer army was to muster for inspection and greet the English General with a parade of honour.

Men from every side rushed for their horses, and in only a

few minutes were formed into a whole square, while General Sir Evelyn Wood, mounting upon a wagon, saluted them, and I could see him lift his hand as if counting their numbers, which all told were about 2,500. The General then took leave, the Boer camp was broken up, the historical places "Majuba" and "Laing's Nek" were once more free.

* * * * *

The arrival of Lady Colley and her visit to her husband's grave provided one of those very sad incidents only occasionally met with in a campaign, for as a rule men are buried where they fall or close handy, and relatives seldom have the opportunity of visiting the spot.

One is always terribly upset and sorry for the poor fellows who lose their lives fighting, and one feels pity for the widows and friends, but in the present instance, seeing this lone woman going into the graveyard and then sink on her knees in apparently a half-fainting condition was almost too much for us, and we who had accompanied her to the spot moved off out of sight and hearing.

It was a cruel evening, dark, raining, thundering and lightning, yet Lady Colley leant over the grave wringing her hands. It was torture to me, and having made a slight note of the episode I moved away altogether.

At last she came forth with bent head covered with a thick black veil, and having re-entered the carriage which had brought her, drove back to Newcastle.

I mentioned the word "raining" just now, and I might have added "such rain." I do not think I have ever seen worse in any part of the world, or even as bad, as falls at times in South Africa. Horses will actually refuse to face it, and it will go through a regulation military waterproof coat.

It was during one of these torrential rains that a whirlwind paid a visit to Newcastle Camp and swept away the tents as though cut by a knife or a scythe. At other seasons of the year instead of rain it will hail, and on my return to Newcastle later on we had a hailstorm so severe and sudden, and the stones so large and hard that they actually pierced corrugated iron roofs and killed all cattle in the neighbourhood, the town afterwards presenting the appearance of a huge pepper-pot. The stones were of such size that you could not get three of them into a half-pint tumbler.

No doubt many readers will say that this sounds like a traveller's yarn, but it is perfectly true.

The unfortunate trouble between Boer and Briton having been patched up, and a Treaty of Peace signed, I thought I might obtain some interesting sketches by a journey up country as far as Pretoria, a distance of some five hundred miles. I went with Mr. H. B. Marshall, whom I had known for some time, and now met at Newcastle. He said he knew many Boer farmers on the road; they would put us up, and I should find them most hospitable people.

As we had to ride the whole distance, we were only able to take a change of shirts and a few necessaries in our saddlebags.

On referring to my note-book, I find it says: "I have been to the little town of Wakkerstroom, and while here a rumour has come in to the effect that a post cart has been stopped by the Boers, and that connection has again been cut off with the base, but I cannot believe it for a moment, otherwise I may be stuck here for months." The little town held out most bravely during the troubles, but then I am not particularly surprised, for wire entanglements had been laid in all sorts of uncanny places, ditches cut, and little forts built outside, and the inhabitants let the enemy know that they had laid down dynamite, of which Boers had a wholesome terror. Dr. Ward, whom I knew in the Zulu War, was one of those shut up here, and he told me that one day twenty-two of the townspeople, a kind of volunteer force, went out and attacked the Boers who were investing them, and, after a sharp little engagement, succeeded in capturing 150 horses, although the Boers were at least 300 strong. They felt it rather hard that now peace was signed the horses had to be given up again. These volunteers subsequently turned out and tried to draw the enemy on and induce them to attack the town, but they never would. There was quite a little fort held by a company of the 58th Regiment about one and a half miles outside; and this was much the same with the town at Standerton, the next place I visited. There were some pretty forts all round this town; the one commanding the east end was really like an old castle on the Rhine. The men who manned them found it impossible to leave during the day or move from one to the other, for the Boers held the surrounding hills, and immediately head or helmet was exposed a bullet came whizzing round or

perhaps through it. Relieving guard was always carried out at night; and this sort of game went on for three months. Fortunately the Boers had no guns, or the forts and towns would very soon have been demolished. A storekeeper amused me very much in course of a conversation. He said he had not had his shutters down for three months, as there was no one to buy his goods, every other man in Standerton being a storekeeper. The only customers they had were now their enemies, and were firing on them, no doubt, he added, in many cases with hopes of wiping off some of their old debts.

One of the men in the forts was telling me what wonderfully good shooting some of the Boers made. "You see that hill there, sir?"

"Yes."

"We have measured it, and we find it exactly 2,100 yards, and yet there was a Boer there who, if we put a helmet up on a nail outside that door, would put a bullet either through it or within a foot of it."

It was late one day, and we were very tired, when Marshall, pointing to a house about a mile distant, said, "Now, that belongs to a very well-to-do farmer, and we will call there." Leaving the main road, we struck a direct course for the house, and as we could not see any one about he rode to the front door and knocked on it with his stick, for he said it would be a great breach of etiquette to dismount, as though we were at an hotel.

In a short time the door was opened by a tall, fine-looking man with a long beard, who did not exhibit the least surprise, but stood with his hands in his pockets, quietly eyeing us. Marshall passed the usual compliments of a fine day—"How are your sheep?"—which he answered by asking us where we came from, and where we were going to. Having informed him on these points, he quietly asked us if we would dismount and off-saddle. Coming up to me (I know not why) he began to act as groom, and having taken off the saddle and rested it against the house, he pointed to the open doorway, and then led both our horses away to the stables, refusing to let us interfere any further with them. Marshall, noticing my surprised look, said, "That's all right; those horses will be jolly well looked after."

In about ten minutes the farmer returned from the stables,

and with some show of ceremony requested us to enter the house, which, considering the wild spot it was in, miles from any town, was very fairly furnished. Having been introduced to his wife, daughters, and sons, he showed us into his guest-chamber, where we were able to have a wash, and then returned to the hall, which was in fact a large room.

In a few minutes the wife came in with some cups of splendid coffee, and Marshall and our host then entered on a long conversation, which I did not understand. It must have lasted for at least an hour and a half, and I was so hungry.

At last the hostess again entered, speaking to her husband, and we all rose and passed into a comfortable little room, where I saw the table laid out for a meal, and even napkins put out for the guests. Having taken our seats, he said grace, and at once proceeded to carve a roast leg of mutton, while his daughter helped us to potatoes, very good bread and butter, and filled our glasses with milk. "Early to bed and early to rise" was certainly the motto, for very soon after our meal we were again shown to our bedroom. At breakfast we had eggs and bacon and fried mutton and coffee, and when we wanted to leave the farmer brought up our horses ready saddled, and with hearty shakes of the hand all round he wished us God-speed. As for remuneration, he would not think of it, although he had given us twenty bundles of forage for our horses, which alone would have cost us two pounds at an hotel.

Our next experience on stopping for the night at a Boer farm was very different, and it occurred more by accident than intention. One day we made a bad calculation as to time and distance to our next resting-place. We got benighted, and lost our road. Just when we were thinking we should have to spend the night in the open veldt, we espied a light some little way to our left, and, making towards it, we found it was in a window of a house—a poor-looking house certainly, but we were tired and hungry. Marshall adopted the same tactics with his stick, and on the door being opened much the same kind of conversation, I believe, took place. This Boer though also hospitable, was of a very different style or stamp. He was rough and dirty, and must have been very poor, for the furniture of the hall, or living-room, was evidently home-made. Our horses were well cared for, and we were invited inside and introduced to his wife and family

and coffee was then produced and handed round with almost Eastern politeness.

The family consisted of eight children, all living, and at home, the eldest being rather a fine girl of fifteen, and we had to go through the process of shaking hands with them all. Now I had been told particularly that if I wanted to work on the good feeling of a Boer mother I must certainly embrace the youngest born. I do not look upon this as news, for surely such tactics have been thought out and acted upon in other countries besides the Transvaal, or am I wrong? However, in this case it was not particularly tempting. The mother and father, to all outward appearances, were just passably clean, as also was the eldest daughter, but as the children ran down the age scale, so did the dirt arise, until at last it arrived at a climax, and I could not but give up my social function.

After some considerable time the wife came in with a bowl of water for the master to wash his hands in, then, handing him a rag, she proceeded to wash her hands, as also did the big daughter. This done, the plates and cups we were going to use were dipped in it and wiped with the same piece of rag, and the dirt and grease on the utensils was a caution. We were then invited to be seated, and a dish of boiled mutton was put on the bare table, with biscuits (made from Indian corn) and cups of milk. I fear I ate very sparingly, for though hungry, my appetite by this time was slightly delicate. I had seen the universal rag put by the side of the master, but I was considerably disconcerted when, having finished his meal, I saw him wipe his greasy mouth with it and then pass it on to me. I preferred to use my own handkerchief, which I was told afterwards would be thought rude; however, I passed the rag on and it went the round of the table. This universal rag of the house is called a faddock.

The sleeping apartments were also slightly primitive or prehistoric, for we all slept together in a large room on trestles or benches, and I found my quarters were by the side of the grown-up daughter. Whether this was out of compliment I know not. Boer farmers and their families, in those days at least, never undressed on going to bed. The man would take off his coat and the woman pull her dress over her head, just reversing the operation in the morning.

There was very little variety of scenery as we continued, day after day, up hill and down dale, across drifts and over long, flat stretches, and the monotony was almost unbearable as well as disappointing. As we looked to the distance it seemed to be composed of a series of flat ridges and conical mountains, something like the eaves of a house and haystacks, one after the other. Very often we thought we were coming to the end of the day's riding; we could see, as we thought, when looking through our glasses a house, yes, an hotel, just over the next ridge. We would push on with renewed vigour, only to find that when we arrived on top of this ridge there was yet another and another before we at last arrived at a miserable kind of shanty or store, with the grand title of hotel.

The proprietor of these shanties is, as a rule, a most abominably rude, independent fellow, and does not attempt to hide his belief that he is obliging you when he is asked if he can give you a room or put you up. He may, or may not, trouble to call to one of his native servants to show you to a room which is most horribly bad, with mud floors, broken furniture, myriads of flies to torment you, dirty bed and linen, in fact dirt everywhere. As for water, that was always a trouble, and I have more than once been told by the boss of the hotel that if I wanted water I must go and fetch it myself, or send down to the river for it.

Actually on one occasion when I drew his attention to the fact that there were two very large tubs of rain-water in the yard, and asked to be allowed to have some, he positively flew in a rage and said it was for his own private use. All right, I said to myself, I will have my revenge; and surely enough next morning I did so. Rising early, and just before leaving the place, I suggested to Marshall that we should upset those tubs of water, and calling to my man George to lend a hand, we three soon pulled them over with a bang and a splash, then, mounting our horses, we rode rapidly away. I wonder what this man thought of his private source of water after that!

I was punished at the next hotel, perhaps, for this escapade. I arrived very dirty, and having had a miserably poor dinner I retired to bed, and in the middle of the night I woke up with an intolerable thirst, and stupid-like I had allowed my candle to burn right down, but striking a match I could see the washing-basin and jug, and by good luck it contained water. In my

desperate thirst I grasped the jug in both hands and took a long draught, but as I finished I thought it had a jolly funny flavour, downright nasty. On lighting more matches and examining it, I found it was actually soapsud water. Evidently the wretch of a native, too lazy to fetch any clean, had emptied the water the previous traveller had washed in back into the ewer, and I had actually drunk it. Thank goodness I had my whisky flask handy. On relating this to Marshall, he most unfeelingly declared it might do me good, for I had scoured my inside with soap and soda.

At last we arrived at Heidelberg, the old seat of the Government, and put up at a fairly good hotel, where I heard that the following day there was to be a meeting of the House of Commons, so to speak. I asked for, and obtained, permission to be present to make sketches. Of course I did not understand a word of what was said, but the greatest excitement seemed to prevail at times, and I was told that the speeches were in the most direct terms against England and the peace; but that was not very surprising, for I remembered how our own House of Commons could behave, and how, whichever side was in power, the other always bullied it.

Our horses were quite done up, so we obtained the loan of an American spider and drove to the laager outside Pretoria, where the English and Europeans had held their own against the Boers during the whole of the rebellion.

Having made sketches of the place and listened to the most wonderful description of the siege, I made arrangements and returned by post cart to Durban, where, after the five hundred miles' drive, I arrived more like a jelly than a human being, with wounds and sores all over and at every point that could possibly come in contact with the cart.

I then took passage for England on one of the Union Company's steamers.

CHAPTER VII

THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN. 1882

Telegram: "Am going to Egypt to-night."

I THINK I have said that my wife had many surprises on account of my sudden movements; the above telegram stands for one of them. It was four o'clock when Mr. Ingram said, "You must go to Egypt to-night by the eight o'clock mail," and when I reminded him that I had a wife, his reply was simply, "I cannot help it; we will let her know and send your baggage on." This was not at all my idea of comfort in travelling, so, bolting down to Charing Cross I got a train and arrived home at a quarter-past five, feeling certain that on receipt of the telegram my wife would have done the best she could to help me. Sure enough, I found my spare bedroom smothered with campaign and travelling kit. In the course of an hour I had packed, and my luggage was in the hall. I then had just half an hour before the cab arrived to take me to the station, and in due course I caught the eight o'clock mail from Charing Cross for Brindisi and Egypt.

As the steamer arrived off Alexandria on the 5th of July, the morning sun shone bright and high over the low shore. All was then in peace, but it was a peace which was very soon rudely broken by those great ironclads lying in the offing. As soon as I landed, I met two or three special correspondents, who had arrived before me.

Diplomacy between the British Government and the Egyptians had apparently failed, and instructions had evidently been telegraphed out to the Admiral, for on the 10th of July the order came from the Admiral's despatch boat, the *Helicon*, that we were to leave the town. By this I mean that the few residents left were to take shelter on the ships. The P. & O. steamer *Tangore* was suddenly turned into a species of

floating hotel, and a charge of ten shillings and sixpence per day per head was made. Jack Cameron of the *Standard* managed to get an invitation to go on board the *Helicon*, while I obtained a berth on the *Tangore*, from which, in consequence of an application to the Admiral, I was able to go on board H.M.S. *Alexandra*.

Perhaps the reader can realise something of my feelings as I stepped on board that grand fighting ship, and was informed that the following morning I should probably witness my first naval engagement. I was heartily welcomed by Captain Hotham and Staff-Commander Hoskins, who invited me to share his cabin, where my tin regulation case was at once placed. Walking about this magnificent ship I could not help feeling slightly excited, for I was now in for a new experience, and the excitement was intensified by the knowledge that for the first time the new ships—the men-of-war that had replaced the hearts of oak—were likely to test their actual capabilities. I was up very early next morning, to find every one on the alert and discover that the ships and the sturdy bluejackets were ready for action. The top-masts were down, the ports were open, and grim cannon had been run out, and all were conscious that England expected every man that day to do his duty. There were in all thirteen vessels that were to take part in the bombardment of Alexandria, eight being ironclads, and the force represented altogether 3,539 men and 102 guns. The *Alexandra*, *Sultan*, and *Superb* outside the harbour were to attack the defences from Ennostos Point to Fort Pharos. Opposite the mouth of the harbour were the *Inflexible* and *Téméraire*, and inside the harbour the *Monarch*, *Invincible*, and *Penelope* looked after the Mex forts at close quarters, the gunboats held themselves in readiness for whatever service was demanded of them.

The *Alexandra* was the Admiral's flagship, but Sir Beauchamp Seymour, who later on received the title of Lord Alcester, remained on board the *Invincible*, so it was not very surprising that we were to have the honour of firing the first shot. The opening of a battle on shore is always most exciting, and a kind of suppressed excitement rages among those about to be engaged, so it is not to be wondered at that an unaccountable feeling should have possessed most, if not all, of us on this eventful morning. A remarkable silence

seemed to pervade the whole ship as we waited for the signal, which at last came at seven o'clock in the morning, in the words, "Fire one shot." Then the excitement which had been so painfully suppressed broke forth, the sailors seemed to be in their element, the men at the guns had stripped just to jersey and trousers as in the olden time, the 25-ton gun was loaded and then fired, the thunder of the report and the swift whiz of the shell as it made straight for the lighthouse fort made all eyes turn upon the spot where the shell broke, and whispers seemed to pass round questioning whether the Egyptians would reply to us. We did not have long to wait. Their guns opened fire, not with a shot just here and there, but with heavy firing along the whole line of batteries. We were evidently fairly in for it, and in a few minutes the ships and forts were pounding away at each other in rare style. Unfortunately there was not very much wind, and the smoke many times enveloped our ship to such an extent that we could not see the coast-line, but, as it drifted in fleecy volumes towards the great white city, with its mosques and minarets, the bombardment continued as fiercely as ever. It has always been called the bombardment of Alexandria, but it seems to me that that is not a correct statement, for our endeavour was certainly not to destroy the town, but, if possible, to silence and smash up the forts along the low-lying coast, and those that were over and above the city. The mighty shots from the *Inflexible* could be easily distinguished and followed as they travelled towards the forts amid the thunderous din that accompanied them. As a matter of fact very few shells did fall in the town, and those were chiefly from the *Inflexible*, and caused by the rebounding of the shells. I remember seeing two going adrift in this manner; one struck the lighthouse fort, then ricocheted off at quite another angle, whizzing over and over, finally landing at a corner of the Rue des Soeurs and standing upright on end.

Lord Charles Beresford, with his usual pluck and daredevilry, steered his little ship *Condor* along the coast to Fort Marabout, which he silenced and captured, earning the distinction of a special signal from the Admiral, "Well done, *Condor*."

When the action commenced I was in the after-part of the ship on the poop, looking at our men working the Norden-

feldt machine-gun, whose little bolts spluttering all along and around the shore battery in front of us must have given those Egyptians a nasty time while trying to load their guns. I could easily see the effect with the aid of my powerful binoculars, and so exciting was it that I felt quite sorry when a message was brought from the captain ordering me to take shelter in the conning-tower, which is in the centre of the ship, and protected by strong armour, although at the same time it allows you to see clearly what is going on. The conning-tower, as every one knows, is a very important portion of the modern man-of-war, for a ship can be worked entirely from within it. The man at the wheel at his post, the engineers, and all the batteries can be communicated with by means of speaking-tubes, and the guns can even be fired from this position.

I had no sooner reached the conning-tower than I heard the command given, "Concentrate your fire, port main battery, on that point from which the enemy has just fired." Captain Hoskins was the navigating officer, and he was engaged throughout the whole of the fighting finding out by means of his sextant how near we were to the shore. He announced 1,100 yards, then I heard 1,150 yards. I think my readers will acknowledge that this distance was quite close enough, and on more than one occasion I could not help feeling a little squeamish. On shore you can get away from a battery heavily engaged, but on board ship there is no retreating. There were generally one or two middies in the conning-tower who received instructions from Captain Hotham standing above them, and I was much amused on looking down in the corner to see one of them during the height of the battle fast asleep. He had been so hard worked during the night and early morning that he was actually worn out, and fell asleep utterly regardless of what was going on around him. After a while I went down into the main battery, and was exceedingly interested in watching the lieutenant in charge asking, "Are you ready?" and then the cheery reply of the chief gunner, "Ready, sir," and then the short, sharp order, "Fire," and the ponderous shell, weighing some hundreds of pounds, was off on its deadly mission. From my point of view the sight was magnificent and inspiring, but it was also a little exciting to watch the enormous shells from the forts coming towards us. "Ah, here is a good one," I could not help calling out as a big

shell struck the water, rebounding and flying up again passed through our funnel, then down into the steam-launch, where it exploded with a tremendous crash. On going to see what damage had been done I found that unfortunately one of our men had been killed and others wounded, and Captain Hotham had a very narrow shave, for splinters from this shell were flying all round him, and he was enveloped in a cloud of sparks and smoke. Once more from the conning-tower I saw Captain Hoskins calmly standing on the deck, his legs wide apart, busy taking the distance from the shore. A heavy shell came bounding along, ricocheted up from the sea, and passed between his legs. It was amusing to see him jump in the air, though whether this was caused by the wind of the shell or involuntary action on his part I know not; it was a close shave. Shortly after this Major Phillips, of the Marines, came up to me and said, "I hear there has been a shot in the Staff Commander's cabin," and remembering that some of my things were there, I suggested that we should go along and have a look at it. But the enemy's fire at this particular moment was exceedingly interesting, and we remained for a short time watching it through one of the port-holes. This proved a fortunate circumstance, and to it, no doubt, we both owe our lives, for presently Midshipman Hornby came along with the information that another shell had just burst in the staff commander's cabin. I could not resist the temptation now of going along to see the effect of these two shots. I might perhaps explain that his cabin was situated just underneath the poop, and as we arrived there we actually found a sentry with his rifle at the slope marching up and down outside, and he calmly informed us in answer to our inquiries that the shots passed close to him, nevertheless he continued his pacing. It turned out afterwards that this unfortunate fellow had been quite overlooked; he had no right to be on duty there at such a time.

Putting our heads into the cabin we saw a most remarkable spectacle, it was simply a jumble of smashed-up furniture and panelling. As for my tin box, there was not a vestige of it to be seen, but I did manage to pick up a few cigarettes out of the thousand that I had there. The major then suggested that we should go down into the wardroom and see if we could get hold of any beer to wash the sulphurous smoke out of our throats.

I would not introduce such a very commonplace topic had it not been that while we were both so engaged with a glass in our hands a shot came through the corner of the skylight above us, and we were fairly bombarded with broken glass and splinters, and we tumbled out of the room in double-quick time. Passing along the main deck we were just in time to see Gunner Harding perform that plucky feat of taking up a heavy shell and dash it into a tub of water, thus saving the lives of all those around, for which brave act he was afterwards decorated by the Queen with the Victoria Cross. It was a common shell, with a fuse still burning. It had passed through the side of the ship above the armour, through the torpedo lieutenant's cabin, struck the combing of the engine-room, and then rolled along the main deck. It was, I believe, mounted on a wooden stand and presented by Lord Alcester to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales as a souvenir of the bombardment. The enemy's fire was now slackening, and very soon came to an end, and it was an afternoon not easily forgotten as the victorious fleet lay off Alexandria, and the few foreign war-ships lying some distance off were full of compliments and congratulations. The American ship, I remember, paid us the great honour of steaming down through our ironclads with her band playing "God Save the Queen," and there is no doubt that the neutral Powers were very glad that this long-pending dispute had been so far brought to an end. It was, perhaps, a fortunate thing that the engagement ended when it did, for had we been required to continue the fight, or to go on again at it the next day, we should clearly not have been able to do so. Our ship, the *Alexandria*, had only fifteen rounds left, and the others were reduced in like proportion, so there is no doubt we should have been obliged to desist on account of want of ammunition. I heard afterwards that we had had our fair share of being knocked about, for we had been struck over 127 times and twenty-four shells had burst on board.

We knew not what was taking place on shore. As evening came on it was quite evident that the Egyptians were bent on the destruction of the town, for flames were to be seen starting in all directions, and it turned out afterwards that the town was entirely in the hands of a rabble maddened by defeat.

On the following morning we threw a few more shots to find out if there was any more fight left in the Egyptian gunners,

but got no reply, and all day the victorious fleet lay off the city whilst the defeated insurgents were sacking and burning the town.

It was a supreme catastrophe, but one which it was impossible for us to stop; I refer, of course, to the burning of the city. It was said to be one of the most striking incidents of the whole campaign, and yet it was an incident so clearly exaggerated that one is puzzled how to put it with justice to every one concerned. The Italians, who had been very sore at the part we had taken in Egypt, talked like maniacs in their description of what actually occurred. One might have thought that every house in Alexandria had been destroyed by the English bombardment, and that every European who, unfortunately, had remained in the town had been dipped in petroleum and set light to. About 140 houses of the largest and finest in the town were burnt, and certainly that was bad enough, for each house had many floors with a number of families and several shops dependent upon it. But the city contained more than 20,000 domiciles, and I doubt whether it could be fairly said that one-eighth of the whole house-room was destroyed by fire. That there were many cases of rapine and even murder there is no doubt, but then only in cases where Europeans endeavoured to save their goods and resisted the looting by the rabble.

On the following morning the Admiral was most anxious to find out the state of things on shore, and Mr. John Ross, a well-known merchant, who had been staying on board the *Invincible*, begged to be allowed to act as one of the scouts. He was utterly fearless, and was also very highly respected by the Egyptians. Mr. John Cameron, the war correspondent of the *Standard*, received permission to accompany him, and blue-jackets and marines were ordered away.

They approached the wharf near the lighthouse fort with caution, and when Mr. Ross jumped on shore he insisted that revolvers and all arms should be left in the boat.

They penetrated to a certain extent into the burning city, and found that Arabi's army had evacuated the place and left it in the hands of an incendiary and infuriated Arab mob, who were having a grand time. They were evidently too engaged in looting, and too frightened of the ships, to risk showing themselves anywhere along the quay.

Having reported the state of affairs to the Admiral, the sailors and marines were at once landed on the Marina, and so disposed as to prevent any sudden rush of the Arab mob. Lord Charles Beresford was in command, and a Gatling gun in charge of a little midshipman and some bluejackets was placed at the entrance of the street leading from the quay to the town. I was standing by the side of this gun when the midshipman in charge was suddenly called away for some other duty; he turned to me and said, "Oh, Mr. Prior, I am called away; will you take charge of this gun? If you see any one looting my instructions are to open fire." I was quite proud, though of course I left the chief gunner to act as he thought best.

Looking up the street through the smoke of the burning houses we could see men with heavy bundles on their shoulders moving about, one in particular coming down the street staggering under the weight of things he had stolen. I felt mad for the moment, and said, "Give him a round;" whereupon the Gatling went "patter, patter," and the next instant over rolled this rascal like a rabbit, and later on when we searched his bag we found it full of silks and jewellery. There is no knowing but that he may have murdered the owner, but there was one thing certain, he would never have the opportunity of doing any harm again. While engaged in watching up this street we heard a peculiar sort of sound away down at the other end of the Marina, and as it came nearer we saw it was from a large number of fugitives, Europeans who had been on shore during the whole of the bombardment, in cellars and out-of-the-way corners, not so much in fear of our shells as the horror of falling into the hands of the brutal Egyptian mob. There were quite 150 of them, men, women, and children, and it was an affecting sight as they pressed forward in a fearful state of panic. They were almost delirious with joy and happiness. They rushed upon us, threw their arms around us, and even kissed us. How they escaped murder was as much a puzzle to us as it was to them. Amongst the fugitives was a handsome old lady, who with her daughter had been hiding behind the small lighthouse at the entrance to the harbour during the whole of the bombardment; for two nights and a day they had been too frightened to venture from their hiding-place.

Then it was that our friend John Ross proved what a good

fellow he was, and how worthy of the reputation he held. He opened his store and issued food to the starving fugitives without any charge or even expecting to be paid; he supplied us with refreshments too. The next thing to be done was to push into the town, if possible to stop any further incendiarism, for the whole of the houses in the chief square of the town were burning furiously, and there was little hope of saving them, although fire-engines from the ships were landed, and the Naval Brigade, as well as every one else, worked hard to prevent the spread of the fire.

As I went forward, going round the corner of a big street, I actually saw a scoundrel of an Arab pouring paraffin-oil through a broken window of a beautiful house, into which he had already flung a burning piece of wood, and the window was then in flames. I called to a couple of the Naval Brigade, and we all three went for this rascal, who was soon arrested and taken down to join the many other scoundrels and murderers we had caught in the other parts of the town.

Lord Charles Beresford and Captain Morrison had been placed in charge of the police arrangements in the town for the time being, and there is no doubt it was by their indefatigable labour and skill in administration that some sort of order was soon restored. Notice was sent round that any one in the town found looting or with stolen goods in their possession would be shot, and requesting also that all such goods should be returned to our headquarters. In several minor cases men did bring round bundles, but it was a trifling matter in comparison with the enormous amount of robbery that had taken place previous to our taking possession. A thing that surprised me was the unnecessary destruction of some of the houses; a sweet-stuff shop, for instance, was ransacked, and the glasses and sweets thrown into the street.

After notice, those who were caught red-handed were shot as an example. This was a gruesome performance, but absolutely necessary. Morning after morning many of these rascals, deep-dyed villains, would be brought up for execution. They were made to dig their own graves in Mehemet Ali Square, and then stood in them. A file of bluejackets or Marines, already drawn up in front received the order, "Ready, present, fire!" The prisoners fell, huddled up, into the grave they had dug, and it did not take long to cover them with earth. This

went on day after day, until at last one side of the square was honeycombed with graves. The executions did not take place, however, without each man having a fair and proper trial with Major French as president of the court-martial. An amusing incident occurred one morning, shortly after landing. I had seen one of these rascally Arabs ill-treating a European boy, and I rushed at him, hit him over the head with my revolver, and kicked him into the harbour. When at last he got on shore I had him arrested and sent up to the gaol, and he was placed amongst the prisoners for trial.

Some time afterwards it so happened while making a sketch of Major French acting as judge over five scoundrels he had before him, and whom he sentenced to death for murder, a batch of names were called over and three men were brought up before him. I suddenly seemed to recognise one, and going up I examined the paper pinned to his breast, on which I read, "Arrested by Mr. Prior at the wharf." This man had been in prison at least a fortnight, and I had forgotten him. I explained the situation to Major French, and after giving the man a great fright he let him off; but I feel certain that if I had not been there, or if that man had lost that paper, he would certainly have shared the fate of the other looters.

The first night on shore after landing the correspondents had to sleep where best they could. Cameron and I put up in Ross's store and tried to make ourselves as comfortable as was possible under the circumstances. It was wonderful that one could sleep at all considering the excitement of the bombardment and the landing, the rescue of the fugitives, and the full knowledge that if the crowd tried to rush us we should have a very bad time. Then there were nerve-racking noises of the houses burning furiously in the town, the walls crashing down and the roofs falling in, besides the sounds of revolvers and rifle-shots heard at intervals during the night, together with the yelling and quarrelling of a mad mob looting. Taken altogether it was not an ideal time for slumber, but I was so tired that despite the noise and excitement I actually did sleep, and soundly.

When we were able to penetrate into the town, revolvers in hand, for we did not know at what moment we might come across a fanatic Egyptian. Our eyes were riveted on what, no doubt, was an appalling misfortune, but nevertheless a

magnificent sight—the burning of the houses surrounding Mehemet Ali Square.

Unfortunately all the best hotels had fallen victims to the flames, but we heard that a second-rate one called Hotel Abbas had fortunately escaped destruction from the fire as well as from the rabble, although the buildings around it were still smouldering. On hearing this news we made for the place at once, and having succeeded in bursting open the entrance we rushed in and each captured a room, without any of the usual formalities. The manager, who was of French descent and a very good fellow, turned up shortly after, and realising that his hotel was about to take the place of a first-class house set to work to collect cooks and servants, and did all in his power to make us comfortable. The place was soon set running, while the prices kept rising day by day. I had chosen what I thought was one of the largest and nicest rooms in the place, but the dirt! oh my, what dirt! I will be charitable, and say it might have been caused by the smoke and dust from the burning buildings outside, for even the Venetian shutters of my window were charred.

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It is not generally known that the British fleet had a narrow escape of being blown up by submarine mines or torpedoes when anchored inside the harbour of Alexandria shortly before the bombardment in 1882.

It appears that the idea of laying mines or torpedoes in the harbour of Alexandria was a conception of General Stone Pasha, an American chief of the Egyptian Army Staff, who had some little time before ordered secretly from America a specially made dynamo or submarine explosive machine. This machine arrived in due course at the Alexandria Custom House, but it having been necessary to keep the matter strictly secret the case was shipped on the other side and manifested as an ordinary package of merchandise, no address being on the case, but simply one or two marks which gave no clue as to its owner or destination. It had been transhipped at Liverpool by an ordinary tramp steamer, and there was no trace as to its origin. The case was discharged at the Custom House, and remained stored in the magazines along with other similar packages waiting to be claimed.

During the month of June, 1882, and shortly after the arrival

of the British fleet at Alexandria, several applications were made by Arabi Pasha, then Minister of War, to Baron de Kusel, who was then Acting Director-General of Egyptian Customs, asking whether a case addressed either to General Stone Pasha or to the Minister of War had not arrived at the Custom House, as so far they had no bill of lading and were without any advice, although he felt certain that the package must have been landed. Instructions were at once sent to the local Custom House to find out if such a case existed. After a careful search no such package addressed as stated could be found.

A few days afterwards two native officers from the War Office put in an appearance, saying they had been specially delegated by the Minister of War to go through the Custom House and assist in searching for the package which they were sure existed. Baron de Kusel very politely explained that no package addressed to any Government Administrator existed at that moment in the Custom House; that hundreds and hundreds of cases of goods existed but they all had special marks and numbers on them, and that it was impossible for the Customs to open any package unless in the presence of the proprietor or consignee, and even then in order to do this he must be furnished with a delivery order from the shipping agency. The officers then returned, and the next day a General and a Colonel appeared on the same errand, and were very haughty in their manners and language. Baron de Kusel had already become suspicious that something was wrong, and consequently became very guarded in the conversation. He was, however, enabled to gather certain indications which convinced him of the necessity of acting at once on his own responsibility if he wished to discover whether such a case really did exist and what its contents were. The officers in the course of conversation declared that Arabi Pasha had decided, unless the package was found and handed over to him within forty-eight hours, that he would send a company of soldiers to the Custom House with instructions to open every case there until they found what they were looking for.

Kusel immediately sent for one of his European inspectors, a smart, intelligent officer and perfectly trustworthy, and gave him private instructions not to leave the Custom House

during lunch-time, when all the employees were away for lunch, but to remain inside with the doors locked until he, the Baron, arrived. They both then set to work. The different ships' manifests were examined at the different sheds where any amount of unclaimed goods had been lying for some time. Certain packages which looked suspicious were quietly opened and reclosed, and thus the work of labour went on. These detective investigations were suspended as soon as the employees returned to their work. In the evening, after everybody had left, the Acting Director-General and his smart inspector recommenced their work. The next day the same exertions continued, but at last their ardour was crowned with success, for on opening a large case which had been lying unperceived under other packages it was found to contain a *submarine explosive* dynamo, strong enough to have blown up a whole fleet. Baron de Kusel then realised what a terrible engine this was, and what destructive power it might have in the hands of Arabi Pasha. Without a moment's hesitation he instructed his inspector to remove or damage certain parts of the dynamo, so that in case Arabi Pasha came with his men and seized the package it would be useless for the time being. The inspector, who had a certain knowledge of machinery, at once commenced to remove some of the most important pieces, and at the same time damaged the principal regulator. The magazine was locked up so that no one could enter the place, whilst Baron de Kusel hurried off to inform the Financial Advisor, who at once sent the Baron off to Admiral G. Seymour.

The Admiral, on hearing what had taken place, was amazed. The Baron suggested that the box should be sent on board and handed over to the Admiral, which was agreed upon, and soon after dark the mysterious case was brought alongside by the Customs inspector, and handed over to the British Admiral.

Admiral Seymour at once communicated all details of the affair to the Admiralty in London, who were profuse in their thanks to the Acting Director-General of Customs for his energetic and prompt action.

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Turning back to the story of the campaign, I should say that after a good deal of waiting and speculation we received

information from headquarters that a reconnoissance in force was to take place the following day. This was news indeed, and full of excitement we set to work making arrangements to go out and witness it. We arranged for carriages, provisions, and ice, as we had done on several occasions before, sent our horses on by our servants, and then drove out in great style. On our arrival at the front we found the mounted infantry were out scouting; the enemy's position was a long line almost surrounded by water, and the only way we could attack him was over small necks of land. The mounted men, having drawn the enemy, fell back, then the 46th and 38th Regiments were pushed forward on the left, the 60th Rifles in the centre, while the ironclad train, under Captain Fisher, accompanied by the Royal Artillery under Colonel Tuson, were on the right. Taken altogether, we had, for what passed in those times, quite a sharp little engagement, and it lasted most of the day. The object of the reconnoissance having been accomplished the order was given to retire. This is always a more or less disagreeable as well as a risky business; on this occasion as this was being carried out the enemy became rather more inquisitive and pressed us very hard. Poor Howard Vyse, of the mounted infantry, who had been busy all day, was killed close to their lines. Captain Piggott determined that he should not fall into the enemy's hands. Calling to three of his corps, he dashed forward and succeeded in carrying him away, while Captain Parr and two wounded men kept the enemy at bay.

It was about this time that it was found necessary to order the 60th Rifles to charge, which they did in the grand old style, sending the enemy flying back to their entrenchments. The way also in which the Marines retired under the deadly fire was fully worthy of their great reputation, every other man falling back a short distance while the others kept up a steady fire, then these men fell back while the others took up the firing, and in every case when a man was hit his comrades stood by him until the stretcher party came up to carry him off the field.

I saw two little incidents during the heat of the engagement which interested me very much. In the first case a poor woman had left Alexandria with her husband, a soldier in Arabi's army, and unable to keep up with him had dropped with fatigue and hunger, and had been left by the roadside to

die. She was found by a sergeant-major in this terrible condition ; he lifted her in his arms, gently placed her under a tree in a safe position, and saw that she was looked after ; but it was futile, for while the bullets and shells whizzed over her the poor woman was evidently dying. The second incident was in the case of a wounded Egyptian, who was put in a stretcher and carefully carried to the rear, and on the way I saw Tommy Atkins giving him water to drink and biscuits to eat. The only injury done to him was that, though he was a Mohammedan, he was revived by a judicious administration of whisky, and he certainly bore that outrage with exemplary meekness, not to say rapture. I expect Mohammed, under the circumstances, will forgive him as well as us.

One of the most interesting novelties in connection with the fighting outside Alexandria was the armoured train, or, as the bluejackets nicknamed it, the "ironclad ashore," or the "ironclad on wheels." It was generally acknowledged to be a magnificent piece of naval architecture ; the credit of the idea was due to Captain Fisher of the *Inflexible* ; the construction was carried out by Captain Poore. It was not armoured in a very serious or ironclad sense, but had sandbags slung upon the engine to protect the boiler from fragments of shells, and some bullet-proof plates and sandbags in several of the trucks to make a shelter for the crew. It was said that Captain Fisher, as guard and conductor of this train, had quite as lively a craft under him as any seaman could wish to command.

On the occasion when I was permitted to go on board, and we steamed out along the line in search of news of the enemy, I could not help thinking afterwards what a hopeless idiot I had been in my desire for knowledge. Shell after shell from Arabi's gunners saluted us as we approached their line of defence, any of which would have disabled our land-ship had it struck it, or even burst near us, and then we should most certainly all of us have stood a very fair chance of falling into the enemy's hands. But we went on utterly regardless of shell or bullet, until our head guard, Captain Fisher, had obtained the information he required for the General, then, and only then, when the order was given full speed astern, did my heart seem to resume its ordinary working again. It is all very well for the reader

to laugh at me, but fighting on land is one thing, the correspondents and others do stand a chance of obtaining shelter at extra disagreeable moments, but when on board a battleship at sea or an ironclad on shore it is another matter, for there you are, and you must take your chance. I might as well mention the composition of this particular train. First came two or three empty trucks to test the track in case of torpedoes or dynamite cartridges under the rails, then the truck with the 40-pounder Armstrong—the main battery as it was called. Behind this were the trucks for the crew and ammunition, the engine itself being in the centre with a steam crane and a couple of light field-pieces to be heaved out thereby for a little independent fighting, and lastly a sternmost truck with a Gatling gun, which could rake everything abaft. Captain Fisher was very proud of his little craft, with her pennon flying amidships and her ensign at the stern, as notable an exposition of science as the mighty *Inflexible* herself.

The next important step in the war to take place was the arrival of Sir Garnet Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief, with headquarter Staff and reinforcements of all kinds. Steamer after steamer arrived with regiments and various detachments of troops, until even the most timid residents in the city became quite light-hearted, and the foreign element showed distinctly in their faces the pleasure with which they saw themselves being more and more protected by British bayonets. They seemed quite to revel in the sight of the scarlet coats. Another very important event was the arrival of Brigadier-General His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, with a brigade of the Guards. It was the first guarantee of England's seriousness in the business, which had hitherto seemed rather to hang fire. It was the first sight given the Egyptians of a Royal personage from home, and cheer after cheer rose amongst the ruins of the city as this popular, business-like, and unassuming soldier-prince at the head of the Guards marched from Alexandria on the way to Ramleh. Following the Duke came General Hamley with the Highlanders, General Willis and the Irish Brigade, and General Drury Lowe with the cavalry. This was quite clear evidence that we were in for some good fighting, and the correspondents were cheerful enough in consequence.

One morning we were told that the much-talked-of bombardment of Aboukir was at last to take place, and people innocently believed it.

There was great commotion in the town of Gabari, and in the harbour the ships were getting up steam and troops were being hurried on board as quickly as possible, but without any flurry. We correspondents were divided up amongst the different ships, and I was allotted to the s.s. *Orient*, on board which the Duke of Connaught, his Staff, and the Guards were to sail.

The Aboukir sell was said at the time to be the best thing Lord Wolseley ever did, but I do not think he seriously believed he had succeeded in baffling the English Press. On August 17, 1882, naval censorship was removed all of a sudden, the *Chiltern* was as free as air to us all, and a whisper (as a secret) was passed round that something might soon be expected in Aboukir Bay to eclipse even the splendour of Nelson's victory on that same spot. We were actually invited to send telegrams to our papers to that effect, with the evident desire that when the news was telegraphed back to the enemy he might be deceived as to the Commander-in-Chief's actual intention. The Press men certainly fell in with the idea and carried out the instructions, but with one eye wide open. It was a fine sight when the powerful squadron of ironclads, transports, and despatch boats steamed off to the north-eastward, gliding away in the long procession of smoke clouds, whilst Alexandria was left under General Sir Evelyn Wood's command with the Highlanders encamped at Ramleh as if to take part in a combined movement to the front. But it was a much more amusing, strange, and whimsical affair when the expedition arrived late at night at Aboukir Bay, making a show as though about to attack the forts, then suddenly departed again for its final destination. The next morning the cat was out of the bag. Arabi had been thoroughly outwitted, and the powerful English squadron, instead of striking at Nelson's old battleground, was quietly making for Port Said, which was occupied in the first instance by Marines and bluejackets, who took possession of the telegraph offices so as to prevent any news of our doings being forwarded. At first there was naturally a good deal of bad feeling with the representatives of the Canal Company, the pilots even refusing to act for us. Eventually

matters were smoothed over, and we steamed through the Canal for Ismailia, but travelling slowly it seemed, to the impatience of many on board. General Wolseley, by shifting his base to an unoccupied quarter and taking the enemy in flank, had scored a great success. Arabi, terribly disconcerted, began hurrying up reinforcements to the lines of Tel-el-Kebir. Sir Herbert McPherson with his Indian contingent, which had already arrived at Suez, was busy to the southward clearing away the Arab garrison from Shalouf and preparing a junction with our main body upon the Ismailia line. As soon as the ships came to anchor the landing of troops and stores at once proceeded vigorously. This part to a certain extent was an easy matter, but the landing of horses was somewhat more difficult. It was not at all an uncommon thing for the boats in which they were being sent ashore to topple over and for the horses to be swimming about among the shipping, with steam launches and other boats chasing them in all directions. Ismailia, like Port Said, was occupied in the first instance by Marines and bluejackets, while troops were very soon pushed forward to brush away the enemy who were showing ugly symptoms of activity a short way inland. The troops had to bivouac at first under the blazing sun by day and the heavy dew by night, and had to endure a tidy amount of discomfort.

Our first encounter with the enemy in these parts occurred at Tel-el-Magfar. I think it would be called a strong reconnaissance, for Lord Wolseley and General Willis were present. The Egyptians had eight or nine battalions and three batteries (eighteen guns engaged), while we had only two regiments, the 46th and 84th, with two guns, under Captain Hinckman. The struggle was very unequal, and should have had but one result had the enemy only possessed pluck and skill. Captain Hinckman certainly worked his guns splendidly, for we could see the Egyptians constantly moving theirs from one sandhill to another, the fire of our shrapnel was so deadly. At the same time our infantry were exposed to a most galling and annoying shell-fire. I was with my friend Cameron close to the Staff when a shell came over and passed so close to the Duke of Teck that he remarked to me later on that he was surprised that the concussion of the air as it passed had not affected him. While this so-called artillery duel was going on I

suddenly determined to go down to the two guns and make a sketch of them in action, and also get a better view of the enemy from that position. I travelled there as quickly as I could, and then laid flat on the ground with my sketch-book in front of me, and set to work while the two guns on either side were pounding away for all they were worth. It only occurred to me that I was running an awful risk when one of the Egyptian shells fell right in front, rolling me over and smothering me in sand. My first impulse was to get up and bolt, my second was to do nothing of the kind. What I did was to shake the sand off my clothes, wipe it out of my eyes, pick up my book, lie down again, and go on with the sketch as though nothing had happened. This seemed to tickle Captain Hinckman very much, for I heard him exclaim, "Well, that is pretty cool." He little knew how badly I felt, but I was determined I would not show my anxiety to bolt, and with teeth clenched I went on finishing my work as quickly as I could. Then saying good-bye I retired to safer quarters, feeling once more what a fool I had made of myself in voluntarily going into such hot ones. I had also to undergo a strong reproof from Lord Wolseley, and a regular bullying from my friend Cameron, for making an ass of myself. "Never mind," I said, "I have got a jolly good sketch." I could not help thinking then of what Sir William Ingram had often said when despatching me abroad, "Don't get hurt or killed, Prior, because if you do the *Illustrated* will get none of your sketches; but if you are killed, send us a sketch of the scene in your blood and we will publish it in red." Good, kind Sir William!

Meanwhile our small English force steadily manœuvred, exposed to a most annoying shell-fire, but always as steady and well in hand as if on parade. The enemy made one or two attempts to come to closer quarters, but finding our fire too hot for him and his left flank threatened by a movement of our cavalry he withdrew under cover of darkness just as the Brigade of Guards, which had been hurried up, arrived upon the ground. After their march through the deep, soft sand the Guards, headed by the Duke of Connaught, bivouacked just where they stood, with the shortest of short commons to comfort them in the chilly hours of a night in the desert. They were without tents, exposed by day to the rays of the Egyptian sun, without rum, without medical comforts of any kind, without

vegetables, without lime-juice—in short, with scarcely the necessaries of life. I was told at the time that His Royal Highness refused all comforts that his men could not have, declaring that he would share their lot.

The morning following the little fight already mentioned I rode out to find the troops had left Tel-el-Magfar and had pushed on to Tel-mahoutah. I could hear heavy firing of gun and rifle, but I could not see anything on account of the mist in front of me. Riding steadily along the sound of firing grew louder and louder, and the shiny mist appeared to get worse and worse, until all of a sudden I was astounded to see the battle as though taking place in the skies upside down; the troops appeared to be standing on their heads. It was not long before I realised the reason. Many times had I seen a ship at sea sailing or steaming upside down, and often have I and other thirsty travellers seen magnificent lakes of water in deserts where water had never existed, the whole deception being caused by mirage, and this was the case on the present occasion. The most unfortunate part was, however, that the troops appeared quite close to me and the sound of battle no distance off, yet I could see no one on the ground. Steadily advancing I at last got out of the mist zone, and there in front of me was the little fight going on in as lively a fashion as possible, the enemy were retreating fast, being pressed very hard by the British force, which I found was under the command of General Ellis. It was not long after this that our troops with great dash captured the standing camp of the enemy at Messameh, with about seven heavy Krupp guns and seventy wagon-loads of commissariat.

Having made all the notes I wanted in connection with the day's work I was about to ride back to Ismailia to finish my sketches when I saw dear old General Willis in one of the gun-pits (captured from the enemy) leaning up against the wheel of a heavy Krupp gun, engaged in writing. As I passed he called out to me and inquired if I was going to Ismailia. "Yes, sir," I replied.

"Well, then, will you kindly take this despatch in to Lord Wolseley for me; our horses are dreadfully done up with the hard work they have had, and yours appears very fresh."

"Yes, sir, he is a fine Arab I bought in Alexandria; but if you invite me to carry your despatch I must respectfully

decline. If, on the other hand, however, you turn me into a soldier for the time being and order me to carry it I will do so with pleasure."

He appeared to understand my meaning, for with a smile he said, "Well, I order you to carry this despatch to Lord Wolseley as quickly as you can."

What I meant was, that being ordered to carry it I might make a claim for the medal of the campaign later on, not that I ever did, and as for it being offered, why the Commander-in-Chief and Government seem as chary of giving medals to correspondents as though they were made of diamonds and would ruin the public exchequer.

They are very ready to ask and expect us to do all kinds of services to assist the army, and in turn charge us full price for the paltry rations we receive, which are doled out to us as sparingly as possible.

As the General gave me the packet I saluted, and putting spurs to my horse started off at a gallop and never drew rein until I had arrived at headquarters in the town. One reason I did not draw rein was that I could not, for my stallion took fright at something, took the bit, and bolted, and it was only when I arrived in the town that I seemed to gain control over him.

It so happened that Lord Wolseley was on the steps of his house, and dismounting I was able to place the despatch in his own hands. As he took it from me he remarked that I appeared to have been riding very hard, "for you and your horse are done up."

"Yes, sir," I replied, "General Willis requested me to hurry." I would never for a moment own that my horse had bolted.

Then turning to one of his aides-de-camp he said, "Give Mr. Prior a drink, I am sure he requires one," and I do not think I ever enjoyed a pint of champagne more in my life.

After the engagement at Messameh the troops pushed on and captured the position at Kassassin Lochs, where a camp was formed. But this appeared to upset Arabi very much, for on the 28th he made a sudden and most formidable attack on our little force, with the evident intention of capturing the position at all costs, and had it not been for General Drury Lowe and his cavalry manœuvre there is small doubt

but that he would have succeeded. There have been many conflicting statements with regard to that magnificent night charge. It has been said that the handful of men at Kassassin were able to hold their own, but I am prepared to state from personal knowledge that had it not been for Drury Lowe's dashing charge that small handful of men under General Graham was likely to have met with a similar fate to that which befell our men at Isandlwana. The cavalry engaged in this historical charge were the Life Guards, the Royal Horse Guards, the 7th and 4th Dragoon Guards, and they drove the gunners from their guns and rode over their lines of infantry by sheer weight and force of big men on big horses. The horror and terror of the Egyptians is easily conceived, as these enormous black horses tore over the sand in the darkness of night and, with the jingling of bits and spurs and the clashing of steel, rushed straight in amongst and over them, like a whirlwind of nightmares. The next day the battle-field showed pretty clearly what havoc had been done by this dashing attack.

Lord Wolseley had said in his telegrams and despatches that he intended to wipe Arabi off the slate, so to speak, on the 13th of September and so that his word or promise should be kept there was much bustle and hard work going on at Ismailia, transhipment of stores and necessaries for the army already at the front. Lake Tismah was like a Liverpool dock with its crowd of steamers, tug-boats, and barges. There was a scramble to do in a few days what ordinarily would have required weeks to accomplish, but every man was working with a will, for Cairo and its European residents had to be saved. It was interesting to see sturdy Irishmen and dark sinewy Indians working on fatigue as though their lives depended on it.

It is not of much use mentioning the dreadful mistakes that were made in England in loading the ships, or the hitches about food and medicine, and the absurd nature of our heavy transport train for a sandy soil, but could anything be more absurd to pack away food and medical comforts at the bottom of a ship and place heavy guns on the top? These latter not being required, the hospitals at the front had to do without the medical stores. I repeat once more that too much praise cannot be given to the pluck and cheerfulness with which our

army did the fatigue duty so important to its success. From the Foot Guards, digging waist-deep in the canal to clear away Arabi's dam at Tel-mahoutah, to the humblest of the Indian camp-followers, staggering up the landing-stage under a sack of biscuits, the whole expedition worked with a will. It was a sight to make the enemies and rivals of Britain reflect very seriously, to see that force of English and Hindoos, of Irishmen and Highlanders, of Guardsmen and Balooches, jostling with a common object, and it gave a splendid opportunity of showing what the men were made of.

Early on the morning of the 9th of September, Cameron and myself started from our camp at Kassassin for a ride to reconnoitre the enemy's position towards Tel-el-Kebir. Having arrived at a high ridge overlooking the camp, we took out our glasses to have a look round generally. We had not been long thus engaged when Cameron drew my attention to a lot of white specks on the horizon. We then looked again very carefully, when suddenly he burst out, "Prior, those are Egyptian troops, and they are advancing. Yes, they are coming on; look on the left there, look on the right; they are going to attack us, and evidently try to surround us; they are coming on quickly; sure enough we are in for a big fight. And even while he spoke we saw a horseman galloping towards us as hard as he could; as he came closer we saw he was a Bengal Lancer. As he passed Cameron, who spoke Hindustanee, asked for news, but the man was far too excited to be able to answer. On he went, galloping down to headquarters.

"Yes," said Cameron, "Arabi is offering battle, and throwing the whole of his army at us, and with our small force here it looks bad."

As he spoke I saw another Bengal Lancer dash up, and by the look of his face it was easy to see that matters were serious. By this time it was quite easy to make out the white costume of the enemy, and even to see the manner of his attack. Looking then down towards our camp we could see a great commotion was going on. General Graham had grasped the situation, for we could see the troops falling in in all directions, and there were we, Cameron and myself, on high ground between the enemy and our camp, watching most carefully the progress of events. The only question

in our minds was as to whether our troops would be in a position early enough to prevent the enemy capturing our camp.

Up came the infantry, steady as a rock, then the artillery galloped up, and at last we saw the cavalry, headed by General Drury Lowe, come dashing along like a whirlwind straight out into the desert with the evident intention of getting round the enemy's left flank.

Once more Cameron observed that he did not like the appearance of things, and that we might have to retreat or even bolt much quicker than we expected. I suddenly realised that I was only mounted on a very poor slow pony, and thought it would be wise on my part to go into camp and get my fast Arab; so I hastened down to make the change as quickly as I could. I was engaged in putting the saddle on, as I could not find my servant, when a shell from the enemy came over and burst right in the centre of the camp, scattering the dinners of a whole regiment. This clearly showed me how close the Egyptians had managed to come. Shell after shell now came over, and one burst by the side of my tent, a large fragment of which passed right through both sides and struck the saddle of my horse as I was tightening the girths. This so startled him that he plunged madly, and I was desperately afraid that he would get away, but I hung on like grim death, and then mounting him rode back through the camp under quite a warm fire.

On my return once more to the front I found the fight going on in lively manner. General Willis had driven in the enemy's centre, while Drury Lowe threatened their flank, and so discomforted the feebly organised Egyptian insurgents that they fell back in confusion, closely followed by the cavalry and horse artillery.

I had been with one of our batteries for some time watching their pretty practice, and was riding steadily back when once more I saw General Willis reclining against the wheel of one of the several pieces of cannon we had captured. This time he was eating sandwiches, and on seeing me very kindly invited me to join him and have one.

We were both sitting on the ground chatting over the morning's work. Directly in front was a native leading two camels laden with water. Suddenly I saw a shell come

bounding along the sand, and it mightily astonished the man as it passed between him and the leading camel, and it certainly astonished me also as I saw it come lolloping towards us.

"Look out, sir," I called, and we only just had time to roll on one side as the shell struck the wheel we had been leaning against, then sprang into the air, without bursting, thank goodness.

"You have just come back from the fighting-line, have you not?" asked General Willis.

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Well," continued he, with evident surprise, "I did not know that correspondents and artists went to the front like that. You run great risks."

I simply replied that unless I saw the actual fighting I could not make genuine sketches. He looked at me very hard and smiled, and there the matter ended.

On my way back to my tent I met Lord William Beresford, who had just come up from Ismailia, and I invited him to come in and have a whisky-and-soda. We were sitting on the ground chatting when suddenly he said, "Prior, don't you want another servant? Take me on, old chap; I'll clean your boots or do anything you want."

Of course I was immensely amused at the absurdity of his remark, but it appeared that, keen soldier as he was, he had voluntarily come out from England in hopes of being put on to some special work—"getting a job," as it is called—but Lord Wolseley could not give him any post, and in a moment of desperation he had turned to me.

Out of sheer devilry I made a formal application for a pass for Lord William Beresford to act as my servant, to which I received an equally formal reply of refusal, delivered with a smile.

Lord Wolseley had announced, as I have before mentioned, that he intended to attack and capture the enemy's position on the 13th of the month, and on the 12th it was quite evident to everybody that some great move was about to take place.

There was a quiet kind of bustle, rations were being drawn for three days, soldiers' and officers' kits were being packed, the horses' harness being examined, rifles cleaned, extra ammunition served out, and it was plain to be seen in every

face that at last the great rush was to take place on Tel-el-Kebir and Cairo.

It was a stirring sight to see battalion after battalion march in silence and in darkness out of Kassassin Camp to the place of rendezvous of the army on the sand-hills. They seemed to be part of a world of shadows.

General Hamley, in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine, gave a brilliant word picture of the advance of the troops in the dark. He wrote: "About five and a half miles distant was the enemy's position. There was no moon, and the night would have been pitch dark but for the stars. The long sojourn while waiting the moment to advance was of a sombre kind. We sat in silence on our horses or on the sand, while comrades moving about appeared as black figures coming out of the darkness, unrecognisable except by their voices. A skirmish had taken place some days before near this spot, in which men and horses were slain, and tokens of it were wafted to us sometimes on the breeze. Long before the time for the advance had arrived we were suddenly startled by a loud clamour on our right, such as might indicate the onset of irregular troops. But the noise died away; it had been caused by the passage of a body of our cavalry across the front of our troops of the First Division, who had been lying down, and hence the alarm. Our guides were the stars. We were steered by a naval officer, Lieutenant Rawson; his guidance was marvellously correct. For his reward, poor fellow, he was shot down in the assault, mortally wounded.

"Just as the paling of the stars showed dawn to be near, but while it was still dark as ever, a few scattered shots were fired in our front, probably from some sentries or pickets outside the enemy's lines. No notice was taken of this, though one of the shots killed a Highlander, and then a single bugle sounded within the enemy's lines.

"A minute or two of dead silence elapsed, and then the whole extent of entrenchments in our front poured forth a stream of rifle-fire. Then as bugles sounded the charge the troops responded with lusty continued cheers, and without a moment's pause or hesitation sprang forward in steady array on Arabi's lines of Tel-el-Kebir."

The Highlanders on the left and the Irish Brigade on the right both rushed madly at a blind position obedient to the

very remarkable order, not to fire or even to load, but to take the enemy's position at the point of the bayonet. Lord Wolseley must have had wonderful confidence in his men to issue such an order. Never shall I forget that awful line of red fire and the hissing and shrieking of the perfect hailstorm of bullets as our troops in gallant style charged over the hundred and fifty yards to the edge of the works, then into the ditch, and pushing each other up and clamouring over the entrenchments threw themselves in amongst the enemy with an impetuosity that nothing could withstand. One of the first to be pushed up to the crest was a brave little bugler-boy, who sounded the charge throughout and went over the entrenchments with his regiment, with bayonets to the right, bayonets to the left, bayonets behind, and bayonets in front, and yet he still went on sounding the charge. There were many extraordinary incidents of daring and coolness. In one case a man of the 42nd Regiment was just about to thrust at one of the enemy when to his horror he found he had forgotten to fix his bayonet. Dodging his enemy he drew his bayonet, fixed it, and then with another dash had his man and several after him. Another case is a man thrusting at the enemy, who caught hold of his rifle and struggled with him; our man slipped a cartridge in, fired and killed the Egyptian.

General Hamley in his account said, "The fight was at its hottest, and how it might end was still doubtful, for many of our advanced troops recoiled even to the edge of the entrenchments."

Some may be surprised at our men recoiling, but when we remember that in the first rush at the entrenchments over two hundred men went down, and that the enemy had a second line of entrenchments and poured in a most deadly cross-fire, the surprise is that our troops faced that fire and rushing headlong forward took this second line of defence. It was a grand sight.

The correspondents did not all go out at the same time as the troops, as they felt certain they could pick them up later on.

I started with Cameron, and we were told that if we followed two particular stars we should very soon come up with the Highland Brigade. We had been riding for some hours without coming across a single soul, when we felt pretty certain that we were going all wrong, and which we found to be the case from the fact that the stars we were following were



THE BATTLE OF TEL-EL-KEBIR, SEPT. 13, 1882.

movable ones, and leading us right away from the track. The darkness and stillness were appalling, and we realised then how stupid we had been in not marching out with the army. Dis-mounting we both put our heads to the ground, listening like Red Indians, and striving to see if we could make out any one on the skyline. Suddenly we heard the trampling of horses, and the question immediately arose in our minds, are they friends or foes? But all doubts were soon set at rest, for I heard a special word, said to be a term of endearment amongst sailors, which told us we were close to friends, and they turned out to be Major Martin and his mounted police, who had done exactly as we had—lost their way.

We then held a conference as to where the army could possibly be, and what was the best thing to do, but we did not come to any satisfactory conclusion, so I suggested we should retrace our steps as near as we could and start afresh. This, by the way, was not as easily done as it might appear, but we struck out to the left and very shortly after came up with a body of cavalry, which turned out to be the headquarter Staff. I found myself in the dark by the side of Lord Wolseley. I explained our misfortune of the night, and asked him if he could tell me the direction in which the army was.

“Yes,” he kindly replied, although most keenly anxious as to events so near at hand. “You see those two stars?”

“Yes, sir; but excuse me, we have been misled by stars all through the night.”

“Yes, I dare say,” he said, with a smile, “movable ones, but these are fixed stars; now you follow those two, and you will soon come across the Highland Brigade; they are less than a mile in front.”

Retracing our steps we rode on, but had not been more than ten minutes on the road when out from the deathlike stillness we heard a bugle-call, and in the next instant saw that most awful line of fire of which I have already spoken; the cracking of rifles and the whizzing and hissing of bullets and shells all around us was terribly disconcerting.

“Go on, Prior,” said Cameron, “ride hard”; and we did, and arrived just in time to see the troops storming the trenches. As I went over one of the ridges, making for the guns between the trenches, I looked down and saw a wounded Highlander leaning against the side of the trench. I gave him a good

drink out of my whisky flask. He was thanking me when I saw an officer a little distance off sitting bolt upright in the middle of the trench, his eyes wide open and apparently looking straight at me. Going over to him I said, "Won't you have a drink?" and putting the flask up to his mouth he, the moment I touched him, fell back flat on the ground. He had evidently been shot through the heart and was dead long before I approached him, although sitting bolt upright.

This rather startled me. I soon nipped out of that trench and rode on.

After a short time to take breath the troops started on again and with another cheer they went right through the enemy's camp, capturing everything around, tents, camels, provisions, ammunition, and any number of prisoners. I could not help wondering as I stood and sketched them whether they understood what they had been fighting for. It was never possible to obtain any very definite information as to how Arabi had beaten up his recruits and gathered his army together, and judging from the appearance of many of the prisoners soldiery was no work for a large proportion of the poor creatures who were brought into the desert to drive out the English. It was quite evident they were very uneasy in their minds as to what their fate would be. They soon learnt, however, that we were merciful conquerors.

Arabi Pasha had escaped on horseback. Riding round the camp in search of sketches and anything there might be worth carrying off, I met Lord Wolseley, and while complimenting him on the success of the fight I remarked that I thought he would have lost a great many more men than he did, and his reply was, "So did I."

He was outside a beautiful tent, in shirt-sleeves, and on my saying I would like to obtain a plan of his attack he said, "Come inside, and I will show you."

A Turkish tent does not as a rule possess much furniture—rugs are sufficient—and throwing ourselves down flat on one of these Lord Wolseley produced his plan, allowed me to copy it, and then certified that it was correct.

It is a remarkable fact that the record of the actual attack, as noted by Major Ardagh of the Royal Engineers, agreed in every detail with the plan as previously arranged by Lord Wolseley.

The order to take the enemy's position at the point of the bayonet was a bold one, and it was successful.

Going over to Arabi's tent I found General Willis, who unfortunately had been wounded in the assault, reclining on a couch and Captain James bathing the wound. Riding over the ground to see what havoc had been done I soon came upon the field hospital, round which were the dying and the dead in lamentable numbers. The stretcher-bearers, the Army Hospital Corps, and the surgeons were indeed busy over their ghastly work, and the low moans and groans as a bullet was being extracted, or an arm or a leg was being amputated, were harrowing. Moving slowly by the entrenchments I came across six men and an officer lying dead in a heap in front of the Arab first works; seven brave fellows of the Highland Light Infantry would never face another Egyptian entrenchment.

Having made a hurried meal I went down to the bridge which crosses the canal at Tel-el-Kebir, and there saw General Wolseley in serious conversation with other Generals. I was wondering what would be the next great move with regard to the army when I witnessed a most terrible sight.

There were many camels laden with luggage moving about in charge of drivers, and a most ferocious-looking beast suddenly made a dart at one of the Egyptian prisoners passing in front of him. Opening its mouth wide it made a sudden movement, and actually crushed and bit the top of the man's head completely off, the man falling down dead. It was horrible, and made me feel more sick than the sight of all the wounded or the fight itself.

Soon after this I heard that as the result of the council of war the Commander-in-Chief had ordered General Drury Lowe, with his cavalry, to make a rapid march on Cairo, and this force left Tel-el-Kebir about noon. General Wilkinson with the Indian cavalry and some guns followed.

On the 14th, about 1 p.m., General Drury Lowe arrived at Sarieh, which was about eight or ten miles from Cairo. Colonel Herbert Stewart, who was in advance of Lowe, moved upon the capital in the direction of Abasieh Barracks; General Wilkinson, who was twenty miles behind, followed up along the east side of the Sweet-Water Canal. General Stewart entered and took up his quarters with the British and Indian

troops in the barracks, and late in the afternoon the prefect, or chief, of the Cairo police, arrived in a carriage and imparted the welcome news that Lieutenant De Chair and Corporal Bennett, who had been captured during the war, were alive and well, and Arabi Pasha, as also Toulba Pasha, were in Cairo and would willingly surrender their swords. The prefect then went back to the city, and returned later with both the Egyptian generals in the carriage, and they were received by General Stewart and accommodated in the guard-house for the night. Toulba shook and shivered with fear, but Arabi was perfectly calm, and having had a wash he said his prayers and slept upon rugs upon the stone floor. Our General and troops slept upon the stones outside with saddles for pillows.

By about 10 p.m. Colonel Watson, R.E., having received the key of the citadel from the prefect, went up with some of the cavalry, occupied it, and turned the garrison out. As there were some ten thousand infantry, besides cavalry and artillery of the Egyptian garrison in Cairo, the General demanded that all arms should be laid down and deposited in the barracks while it was still daylight. Promptly the men obeyed this order, apparently only too pleased, and crowds of them were to be seen the next morning thronging the banks of the canal as they hurried to their homes. They seemed heartily pleased with their freedom, and they were very respectful to the victorious Englishman.

CHAPTER VIII

EL TEB. 1883

FOR some time previous to December, 1883, the Mahdi had been giving the Egyptian Government the greatest trouble and anxiety. He had posed as a second prophet, had established his headquarters at Khartoum, and collected a vast horde of believers in his new religion. His principal General, Osman Digna, had attacked and besieged the towns of Sinkat and Tokar, and it was necessary that an expedition should at once set out to relieve these towns and, if possible, put an end to this rising. Baker Pasha, who was then Commandant of the Egyptian army, was appointed to command the expedition.

When the news of this rising reached England I was at once ordered out. I arrived at Suez just in time to find that Baker Pasha, whom I had the pleasure of knowing from previous years, was preparing to start from the wharf. Accompanied by his small Staff of Colonel Hay and Major Harvey, he was on board the s.s. *Mansurah*, bound for the port of Suakim, where Egyptian troops had already been massed and were waiting the arrival of their General. He very kindly invited me to accompany him on board the ship, which, by the way, was about one of the dirtiest I had ever travelled on, and in the course of four and a half days we arrived at our destination.

As I had no quarters to go to, Baker Pasha invited me to take up my abode with him at a large building called the Caravansary, overlooking the harbour, where to my delight I found my friend John Cameron was already established.

Baker Pasha reviewed the troops. It was evident from our conversations that he was not at all satisfied with their fighting qualities: no Egyptian was ever renowned for pluck. I cannot help thinking that Baker was in hopes that he could

arrange with the Soudanese about Tokar and Sinkat instead of having to fight them, and for this purpose he invited several of the friendly sheikhs in the neighbourhood to come in and confer with him. He even succeeded in persuading one of the great chiefs of the unfriendly tribes to come in also. This man apparently had been won over to General Baker's cause, but unfortunately nothing came of it. The cause of the Mahdi was in the ascendant; he was credited with supernatural powers, and his fame had spread abroad through all the desert wastes. A grim phantom of fanaticism confronted General Baker, who, as a practical man, recognised the situation very quickly, and realised that it was a question of crushing the enemy or being crushed.

As soon as the sheikhs had left him he determined to seek reinforcements, and for this purpose he arranged to pay a visit to Massowah and collect what troops he could from there. Cameron, Brewster Bey and I were permitted to accompany him on one of the Khedive's yachts, which had been placed at his disposal. This yacht was exceptionally slow, and I doubt if we had once gone out of sight of land whether the captain would ever have found it again.

Before arriving at Massowah we called in at a little bay by the name of Trinkitat, and found that we could land troops there if necessary, as it was the nearest point for Tokar. We then proceeded on the voyage. Massowah is an island joined to the mainland by a long causeway, so that an enemy attacking the town would have to pass along this and over a bridge, which could have been destroyed at a moment's notice by a little dynamite.

Having inspected the fort, which was very well armed, having satisfied himself that the Governor could repel any attack made by the Mahdi's followers, and having made sundry arrangements with the Governor as to the way in which the town should be guarded, the General collected all the black troops that could be spared and returned with them to Suakim. Baker Pasha's force was now composed of Egyptians, Soudanese, and a sprinkling of Somalis—the latter tribe hailing from Aden. The black troops he had brought from Massowah and a few Italian volunteers completed the force. Day after day this motley crowd were taken out to exercise and taught the way to form a zareeba in the shortest time.

Sinkat was the nearest biggest town to Suakim, and the General, with his Staff and small force, set out one morning to reconnoitre the position. Having arrived at a certain spot, we rested while the scouts were sent forward. We had left early in the morning, and towards twelve o'clock I began to feel very hungry. Fortunately I had with me a kind of patent box made of tin, containing cotton-wool and methylated spirit, which could be fixed to the bottom of soup tins and preserved meat tins. By taking off a strip of the tin a light could be applied to the cotton-wool, and the soup or meat heated in the shortest space of time. One of the dishes I most fancied was Moyer's Irish stew, and of this I had taken out several dozen tins.

Before starting in the morning I had been careful to put two of these tins in my saddlebags with plates, knives and forks, and my holster flask of whisky on one side, with a bottle of water on the other, so when I felt so hungry I asked Cameron if he had brought any lunch with him.

"No, old fellow; I thought we should only be out for two or three hours."

"Ah, well, let's have an Irish stew."

He was delighted, so we sneaked off behind a bush, opened a tin, lighted one of the patent fires, and presently we both enjoyed a lovely meal with an Egyptian biscuit, which, by the way, is very fine. We washed down our repast with whisky and water.

Having lighted our pipes, we strolled over to where the General was, and found him reclining on the ground chatting with Colonel Hay and Major Harvey and complaining because the scouts had not returned.

"Well, General," I said, "have you had any lunch?"

"No, Prior; and I am as hungry as a hunter."

"What about a little Irish stew?" I asked.

"Oh, don't chaff!" said he; "this is not the time for it. I am too hungry."

"All right, sir, but if you would like some I should be delighted to supply it."

He looked at me in wonderment as I once more disappeared behind the bushes. Getting out the remaining tin I soon had it boiling, and my man having cleaned the plates and knives, I went over to the General with the steaming hot stew and

biscuits. I was received with acclamation, and nothing could have given me more pleasure than to see the way in which the three enjoyed this little picnic. They had only just finished when the scouts returned and reported that the enemy were in very feeble force around Sinkat, and that Osman Digna and his followers were in great strength on the Red Sea coasts, between Trinkitat and Tokar. The General therefore determined to return at once, collect all his available troops, embark them on the different steamers belonging to the Egyptian companies, and sail at once for Trinkitat.

On the General's Staff were Colonel Sartorius, Colonel Hay, Major Harvey, Dr. Leslie, Forrestier Walker, and Morrice Bey. Jack Cameron, Francis Scudamore, and I were invited to accompany him on his ship.

Unfortunately some time before leaving Suakim I had met with an accident to my right leg, and although carefully attended to by Dr. Leslie it gradually grew worse and worse until an ulcer made its appearance. I would not give in, or remain in bed, as I was strongly advised to do. I felt I had my duty to my office. So I had a hammock fixed up in which I used to be carried about the town by four natives to obtain sketches of what was going on. When the expedition was about to set sail I was told that it was perfectly absurd for me to attempt to go, but I persisted, living in hopes that day by day my leg would be better and by the time we arrived at the place where we were going to land I would be perfectly all right. I was allowed to take my hammock and bearers on board with me, and then remained in bed during the voyage down the Red Sea; but to no purpose, for with all the doctor's attention the leg grew worse and worse, so bad that at last I could not stand on it. It has since been suggested that the cause of the great inflammation was the impure water with which it was bathed.

On the morning of the landing Dr. Leslie examined the wound very carefully, and with a grave face said he feared I would not be able to join in. But I was persistent about accompanying the expedition, and I was helped to dress by my man. When I attempted to stand I was in such agony that I actually collapsed and fell on the floor. Then poor Dr. Leslie, seeing the state I was in and realising my intense disappointment, told me he would do the best he could to make some



DISEMBARKING BAKER PASHA'S FORCE AT TRINKITAT.

sketches for me, as he was a bit of an artist. He added that I could finish up afterwards.

I was in a great rage, but at last gave in, and was persuaded to sit on the upper deck with my leg in a sling and watch the landing of troops and stores in that position. I kept telling him that my office and the public would be sure to say something unkind about my not being present at the fight, so the doctor voluntarily offered to write me a certificate. I have always kept it in memory of the dear kind fellow.

The Bay of Trinkitat was of considerable size, the ships were able to run in close to the land, and the troops, horses, and stores were transported to the shore with much more ease than might have been the case. At last the time arose when everything was in order for the advance, but I do not believe that any one on the Staff or in the whole column started out to face the enemy without a large amount of doubt about the result. The enemy was known to be a very brave one, utterly regardless of life, and the Englishmen present, remembering Tel-el-Kebir, had a very lively recollection of the miserable stand the Egyptian troops were capable of making.

Between the shore and the distant hills was a morass, the water being from one to as much as four feet deep in some places, with deep holes and ridges, so that the horses and men stumbled about very badly indeed when crossing. When the mounted scouts were sent forward, the horses were constantly tripping and throwing their riders. At last Baker Pasha and his little army got across, and he then formed up his troops, which were really little more than a rabble, into a square and marched forward. But when some seven miles from the seashore the enemy came on so suddenly and with such a terrific rush that the Egyptians and Soudanese could not stand it, and quicker than it takes me to write the words the Mahdists were fighting hand to hand with them. The square was soon broken and the Egyptian troops, instead of standing against the onslaught, simply fell down on their knees and asked for mercy. Poor Dr. Leslie, Forrestier Walker, and Morrice Bey fought side by side, but were overpowered and lost their lives. Jack Cameron told me he saw more than one Egyptian soldier chased by an Arab, throw down his rifle, go down on his knees and plead for mercy. The mercy he received was a blow from his own rifle seized by his

enemy, who brained him with it. As soon as the Staff saw that the game was up, and that this army was being annihilated with the exception of those who were flying to the shore, they begged Baker Pasha to retreat; but he did so, however, only on the earnest persuasion of Colonel Hay and Major Harvey. He seemed so astounded and disappointed at the cowardly manner in which his troops had behaved, that he at first seemed determined to die amongst them. Colonel Hay, however, insisted on his cantering from the scene of action. They were followed by the enemy all the way down to the hills above the morass, spear after spear whizzing by and around them.

Lying in my chair on board the ship, which was close into shore, I first became aware that something was wrong by seeing in the far distance mounted men galloping and others on foot running as hard as they could, and with the aid of my glasses I could easily see our troops. At first a few, then more and more, until at last, turning to the captain of the ship who was by my side, I exclaimed with horror, "It's all up; the column has met with a disaster. It's a bolt." Sure enough I was right. On they came, and in their mad headlong flight from the enemy they threw away their rifles, ammunition, accoutrements, in fact everything they could, so as to enable them to run the faster and get through that horrid morass.

Presently I saw Cameron and Scudamore coming along, and immediately I begged the captain to send a boat to the shore, which he did, to bring them off to the ship.

General Sartorius and the other officers had the greatest difficulty in making some of the men remain and make a stand, and it then was only done by their drawing their revolvers and actually firing in amongst them. Fortunately the enemy would not come across the morass for fear of the ships, of which they had a holy terror. Many of the Egyptian troops did succeed in getting on board the ships, and some of them, in their fright, actually hid themselves in the coal bunkers; and pitiable objects they looked when hauled out later on, their white coats smothered in coal dust. The whole of the night was spent in reshipping the stores that had been put on shore, and in the morning the remnant of the army steamed back to Suakim, sadder and wiser men.

It turned out afterwards that out of a total of 4,000 men who were landed at Trinkitat only 1,400 returned, showing that 2,600 were killed at what has been called Baker Pasha's El Teb.

The towns, however, of Sinkat and Tokar were still unrelieved, and the British Government, realising that Baker Pasha's forces were not able to cope with the fanatical uprising in the Soudan, determined to send out British troops, not only to raise the siege of these towns, but in fact to save Egypt from being overrun by the Mahdi's Arab horde. An expedition was very soon organised and sent out under the command of General Graham.

Long before the ships conveying them had arrived at Suakim, Admiral Sir William Hewitt on board H.M.S. *Euraylus*, accompanied by the *Superb*, had come into the little port. All available sailors with machine guns were landed as a protection to the town, for friendly Arabs were constantly coming in with news as to the doings of the enemy who, they said, was threatening to attack.

Sir William hearing of my accident very kindly called on me, and then insisted that I should go on board his ship and place myself under the care of his English surgeon. I accepted this offer gratefully, and in spite of all the doctor's skill and attention of the sick-bay stewards, a month passed before I could walk again.

By the time I was able to get about, General Graham, his Staff, and the British troops had arrived and were encamped outside the town.

Admiral Hewitt, who had been appointed Governor of the town, very soon transformed the dirty streets into quite respectable thoroughfares. We heard that he had invited some of the friendly Arab sheikhs to come and visit and confer with him on board his ship. When they arrived in a steam launch and came up the companion way it was most amusing to watch their faces as they slunk along the deck on their way to his cabin. After conferring and partaking of his hospitality they were shown around the ship. First of all the Nordenfeldt guns were fired for their entertainment, and then they were taken between decks and shown some of the heavy guns, and although, like all Easterns, they tried to hide their thoughts, it was quite evident they were awestruck by what they saw.

Admiral Hewitt had arranged with one of his lieutenants that a little gun-cotton cartridge should be fired over the side of the ship down by the gangway as each of these worthy potentates left. It was no doubt very amusing but very hard lines on the poor visitors. As the first man bid the Admiral goodbye he stepped over the side of the ship and commenced going down the gangway, when a cartridge went "bang, bang." Poor beggar, it did startle him, and didn't he rush down quickly! The next man did not seem so anxious to bid goodbye, but when he found he was compelled to he made a dash for the gangway in hopes of escaping the salute. But no; "bang," went another cartridge, and each of them were treated to the same compliment. When they had all departed we all burst out with a merry laugh. It was one of Sir William's little jokes. Of course the whole thing was done to establish a wholesome fear in the minds of the chiefs.

At last the British troops had been massed and reviewed, and the time had arrived when they should journey down the Red Sea and endeavour to succeed where General Baker Pasha's army had failed, viz., to relieve the inhabitants of the town of Tokar. Ship after ship once more arrived and anchored in the Bay of Trinkitat. The landing began at once, and the scene was soon a very lively one, with steam launches rushing about, towing boats full of troops and provisions.

In the sketch I give, you may see on the left the Transport and Commissariat Department; a little further on is the Naval Transport office. Then you come to headquarters; next to the 15th, 19th, and 10th Hussars; and further on the 42nd Regiment—or Black Watch—and the 65th; while four miles distant, just above the morass, is a mound that the enemy had established as a fort, which we took with very little trouble.

The British army is not given to moving impetuously; it takes care. Tommy Atkins must have his provisions and his supplies of water, and the difficulty in this case was that every drop of water had to be obtained by condensation from the salt water. Barrels, tubs, skins, and everything available were used for conveying the water from the shore to the fort, which was turned into a kind of base of supply.

At last everything was in order, and the troops were formed

into a square and then rested for the night in that formation so as to advance early in the morning on the enemy's position. I had my quarters in the fort.

In the morning word was given to advance. We marched in square formation, and had only proceeded some three or four miles when we espied the enemy close to the village of El Teb. We became aware of their close proximity by the sudden report of a gun and the swift whiz of a shell as it rushed over the square and burst on the other side.

The General was most anxious that the enemy should attack us, and therefore the order was given for us all to lie down, so as to tempt them to charge. They did not seem, however, at all inclined to do this, but kept on treating us to shell after shell, some bursting in the square, but most of them over our heads. Baker Pasha had accompanied us as chief of the Intelligence Department, and I was just walking towards him when a shrapnel burst overhead, and I saw him reel in his saddle. "He's wounded," I thought; and sure enough, as I went nearer to him, I saw that this was so. Colonel Hay and Major Harvey, who were still acting as his Staff officers, rushed up and begged him to dismount; but he refused for a long time, saying he would be all right. At last, however, he had to do so, and the doctor, examining the wound, found that he had been struck by a bullet from the shrapnel in the cheek, just below the eye. No operation could possibly then be performed, so the wound was simply bandaged up, for General Graham had given orders that as the enemy did not seem inclined to charge us, we should attack them. As this order was issued, our left flank became a front face, and went straight for the enemy's strong position. The 65th and 75th Regiments stormed the enemy's fort, in which were two Krupp guns, which had been giving us so much trouble. Although the enemy tried by several impetuous rushes to break through the square, their attempt was futile, and we secured the position with a very small loss.

I remember seeing Colonel Burnaby at this time without a coat, with shirt-sleeves tucked up above the elbow, and a double-barrelled gun in his hand, picking off the enemy as they rushed in, in the same way you would kill big game. The pluck and fanaticism of these Arabs was remarkable, for suddenly you would see one man dart out from amongst the

others and make a dash for our square, and then came Colonel Burnaby's chance.

The enemy shortly afterwards seemed to be rather sick of it, and, as he appeared to be retreating, the order was given for the 19th and 10th Hussars to charge. I heard afterwards from many officers that they did not believe they did as much harm or damage to the enemy as the enemy did to us, for, with marvellous agility, they dodged in, around, and even under the horses, hamstringing them and spearing the men. We lost twenty killed in this manner, and twenty-two wounded, whereas it was said that the enemy did not lose half that number. Poor Lieutenant Slade was killed in this charge.

The Naval Brigade, not to be outdone by the infantry, were hard at it with Gatlings and Gardiners, and great havoc did they cause. Sir William Hewitt conducted the whole of the operations of his men.

The next incident was the taking of the enemy's trenches by the 42nd and 23rd Regiments. This trench was a very strong one and full of the enemy bristling with spears, and all around was a perfect rabbit-warren, holes in which the Arabs huddled or laid down in and pretended to be dead. As we went over the ground they would jump up and spear our men. When it was realised that this was a little game on the part of the enemy, our troops fired into the holes and speared the enemy as they lay there. A great deal was said in England at the time about the allegation that the British troops on this and on other occasions in the course of this war had bayoneted or shot wounded rebels, but I should like these critics to have been in the shoes of our gallant redcoats and bluejackets. The fact is it would have been simply suicidal to have spared the wounded Soudanese. Mercy only entailed a shot or stab in the back, experience having taught our men the sad truth that the fallen enemy had to be slain in self-defence. The only choice lay between killing and being killed. Under these circumstances I maintain that our men could not have done otherwise than treat their savage and relentless enemies as they did.

I was by the side of Colonel Green of the 42nd, when I heard General Graham give him the order for the 42nd Highlanders to charge the enemy's trenches, but the 42nd were advancing and taking the enemy's ground so steadily that



BATTLE OF EL TEB—ADVANCE ON THE ENEMY'S FORT.

when the order was given they did not seem inclined to rush madly forward. I heard a young officer say to Colonel Green, "Did you, sir, order us to charge?" and the reply soon came, "Yes, the 42nd Highlanders will charge."

Then this young officer, revolver in one hand and sword in the other, said, "Come on, men!" and rushed straight for the trench, killing one man with his sword and another with his revolver.

On my return to England I heard that my sketch of shooting and killing the enemy in this rabbit-warren was questioned in the House of Commons, and also that Mr. Gladstone rose and defended the situation.

Some time afterwards I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gladstone at Mr. Percy Wood's studio in Queen Anne Street, where he had gone, accompanied by Mr. H. M. Stanley. I took the opportunity of thanking Mr. Gladstone for the kind way in which he had spoken of me when my sketch was called in question in the House of Commons, and I must say that his reply was more than gratifying. I felt exceedingly proud, for he said that he had always taken a great interest in the sketches which I had sent home to my paper, and he had no reason to doubt the truthfulness of the drawing in question or the necessity for the troops to act as I had represented.

Not far from the trenches was a red-brick house and, a little further on, an enormous boiler. We soon discovered that the red building was full of the enemy, and the difficulty was to get them out. The 42nd and 23rd advanced and surrounded it on three sides, and then the enemy in their wild fanaticism dashed out one by one at our men. It is needless to say they were immediately riddled with bullets, but in more than one case, so fierce and rapid was their onslaught, they actually got near enough to the 42nd to be able to throw their boomerangs at our lines under the impression that these would bring us down.

One man in particular I noticed. He held spears in the left hand, and he actually flung his boomerang and succeeded in hitting one of our men on the leg before he was killed.

On arrival at the boiler we found it surrounded by the dead and dying. Inside were no less than seven men wriggling in their death-throes. The enemy's loss at El Teb was said to be close on 3,000 men. As soon as the battle was over General

Graham re-formed his square, and having sent all the wounded to the shore he marched for the town of Tokar, which he had gone out to relieve. As I was anxious to finish my sketch of the day's work, I also hurried to get on board ship. On our way back the nearest road was by the spot where Baker Pasha's army had had that disastrous fight and almost been annihilated, and never shall I forget the awful sight presented to us. I had in my previous experiences seen the fetish place of the King of Ashanti, and had witnessed the acres of ground smothered with skeletons and corpses of those who had been sacrificed in the Golgotha of Coomassie, but the countless thousands of heads which I there saw did not present to my mind anything like such an awful spectacle as this. There was a black mass of bodies, some eight hundred, heaped one on top of the other, and all around other figures lying in every imaginable position. All were stark-naked; the rifles and everything belonging to them had been taken away, and the scene as well as the stench was horrible. Nevertheless, those who were well enough to do it endeavoured to find out the four white men who had fallen victims during that fight. We succeeded, and I am happy to say I found the body of my friend Dr. Leslie. As a matter of fact, the bodies were all of the same colour, but we were able to pick the white men out by the colour of their hair. I need scarcely say that we buried them before proceeding on our road.

I then cantered on towards the shore, when just as I arrived on the hills overlooking the morass I came up with Admiral Sir William Hewitt and Baker Pasha. The latter I could see reeling in his saddle, evidently suffering agonies from his wound. Suddenly remembering that I had a flask of brandy in my pocket, I released the stopper and handed it to him.

"Have a drink of brandy, sir."

He looked at me with eyes that spoke his thanks more plainly than words.

"Take a big draught, sir." And he did.

A few minutes later, as we arrived at the edge of the morass, I saw Sir William Hewitt's pony apparently refusing it, and the Admiral looking very disconcerted. Like many sailors who are great men on their ship, whether with guns or up aloft, he was not a great rider.

"Excuse me, Admiral Hewitt," I said, "would you like to

change horses with mine? Mine is a very steady animal, and my saddle is very comfortable." It was one of Smith's colonial saddles, with wallets in front. Over it was strapped my waterproof coat, while behind the saddle was strapped a rug, so that it was just like an easy-chair. Jumping off, I begged him to do the same, and with a "Thank you, Prior," we made the change.

"Now," I said, "sir, I am a young man, and I will give you a lead across this morass. You follow me, and if you see me stumble and fall off into a hole you halt until I find a better place." But as luck would have it I gave them a splendid lead, and we got across that mile of nasty, disagreeable ground without a single halt or stumble.

We then made for the Admiral's ship, H.M.S. *Sphinx*, and Baker Pasha's wound was examined by the ship's doctor, a clever little Irishman named Logan, but the patient would not allow any operation to take place that night, saying he would wait until the morning.

About seven o'clock in the morning I was in the doctor's cabin, when he came in and said he had succeeded in extracting the bullet from Baker Pasha's face. He told me he had probed the wound to discover where it was, and had endeavoured to get it out with his ordinary forceps, but had found it so large that he could not catch hold of it. He therefore had to use his molar forceps. First of all he had to make the incision larger to enable him to get the forceps in, and in the end he extracted a bullet an inch in diameter and weighing exactly three ounces, which he then produced and put in my hand; and there could be no doubt about it by the fact it was still covered with blood. Baker Pasha had refused to have chloroform or any anæsthetic, and had undergone this horrible operation without a wince!

This bullet was eventually mounted by Colonel Frederick Burnaby, and presented to Baker Pasha as a memento of the fight. There was an ebony stand on which was a silver mortar to hold matches, and just in front of it was the bullet, and I afterwards saw it in the General's study amongst his keepsakes.

The Admiral asked me to dinner with my friend Cameron, and we had just finished and were smoking cigarettes when the Admiral suddenly said, "Oh, by the way, if you have any

letterpress or sketches for England, the *Jumna* is leaving in an hour for Port Said to catch the Australian mail, and it will be home in ten days." Cameron and myself almost together exclaimed, "Great heavens, sir! why did you not tell us this earlier? We could have got ready and sent something."

"I did not know until just now," he replied. "However, you have an hour."

Unfortunately Cameron and myself had left our notebooks in our other coats on board our ship the *Rinaldo*, but the Admiral lent us his cutter, and away we went. Once on board we both set hard to work. Cameron got his description of the fight ready, and I made a double-page sketch, which was eventually published in facsimile. We then offered £5 to the crew if they would row us off to the *Jumna*. It was blowing hard, but the men readily got their boat and away we went, they rowing like mad; and I remember that as we came alongside the transport she was actually just getting under way and the screw was revolving, but, yelling "Ship ahoy!" an officer came down the accommodation ladder, and he was just able to reach our envelopes as we told him who we were, and begged him to post these letters on board the Australian steamer, saying, "Never mind the postage." He, being a jolly good fellow, readily complied, the result being that Cameron's account and my sketch arrived in England a whole week ahead of the ordinary time.

Now a very curious incident in connection with this. I telegraphed to my office to say, "Present El Teb fight—posting sketch." Sir William Ingram on receipt of this advertised my telegram in the *Daily News* and other papers, and said he would publish the sketch on a certain date. On the following morning an illustrated contemporary advertised in the same papers to the effect that the postal time from Trinkitat to London was seventeen days, and that anything published by any paper earlier than that would be fictitious or an invention. Sir William again on the following morning once more announced in these papers that what he had previously stated was correct, and that he would publish my sketch on the date he mentioned. Unfortunately he had miscalculated a whole week, for he certainly did not know my sketch was going to get there in ten days instead of seventeen; but it actually occurred, for the officer had posted it, and it arrived at my office within ten days.

So delighted was Sir William at this fact that he sent down to the *Daily Telegraph* to ask the proprietors if they would like to publish a facsimile of my sketch, and they did so on the following morning on the front page. This, I believe, was the first time in the annals of the *Daily Telegraph* that such a thing had been done.

A further happy sequel happened to me on my return to England. Sir William Ingram, meeting me outside his room, grasped both my hands and said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Then, drawing me into his room, he sat down and wrote me a cheque for several hundred pounds as a bonus. I had, by luck and through fortunate circumstances, saved his word.

But to hark back to the war. General Graham had marched with his square to the town he had gone to relieve, and the inhabitants received him with open arms and joy unspeakable. They fired rifles, the women cried, and together with the men rushed out and kissed the General's hands, doing all they could to show their delight at being relieved, for they had been besieged by the Arabs for some months. The whole of the inhabitants were safely brought away, taking what household goods they could pack on camels or donkeys, and they accompanied the square back to the shores of Trinkitat.

The village of Tokar having been relieved, there was nothing left for the General to do but to steam back. So the troops, together with the refugees and all the necessary stores, camels, and horses having been re-embarked, we set sail, only to find, however, that the Arab forces under Osman Digna were massed some little distance outside the town of Suakim, which they threatened to storm and capture. Another expedition, therefore, had to be organised to crush them.

All the necessary arrangements for the transport of provisions and water having been made, the General, with all his available forces, set out once more in square formation from near Suakim to Tamai. Brewster Bey and Mr. Wylde were acting as chief scouts; they understood Arabic well, and had received news from their spies as to the exact position where they could come across the enemy. The General was informed of this, and knew the actual time he would require for the column to come up with the Arabs. Nevertheless, he actually gave instructions that we should march at one o'clock in the

daytime, knowing that we had twelve miles of ground to cover, and that we should arrive in front of the enemy's position just as the darkness of night would suddenly fall upon us. During the march I found myself quite close to General Graham, and I could not resist the temptation of asking whether he thought it wise for us to have left so late so as to come up with the enemy in the dark. The only reply I received for that piece of impertinence on my part was, "Oh dear, yes; that is all right; we are British troops."

"All right, sir," I replied, and continued on the march without venturing another opinion. The fact, however, remains that we did arrive to within a few hundred yards of the enemy almost in the dark. As it was too late to attack them that night, we were halted and formed into a hollow square, and set to work to cut down what brushwood we could find to form a zarea as a protection against a sudden rush of the Arabs. While this was being done, Cameron drew my attention to two camels which were some distance off, evidently in trouble, so we rode gently back to them and discovered to our immense joy that they were laden with five skins of water. They had evidently been deserted by the transport, so we thought it perfectly fair in war-time to annex them. This we did, and returned to our square leading them as though they belonged to us, and handed them over to our servants, thinking ourselves pretty lucky, for the five skins of eight gallons each made forty gallons of water that we had discovered in a waterless desert. We then prepared to get something to eat, feeling sure, however, that the enemy would not leave us quiet very long; and we were right. Shortly afterwards they commenced a desultory and harassing fire right into our midst, to which we replied with a shell and a few rounds from one of the machine guns, which must have had the desired effect on the Arabs, for they ceased firing after this, and all was perfectly still, almost as death itself. We were not allowed to speak or to smoke.

As it appeared that the enemy were not meditating an attack, we were all ordered to lie down and get what sleep we could. At one o'clock in the morning the enemy started their little game with a withering fire. Up jumped our men and stood to arms to repel an attack. From this time until day-break the enemy made it pretty lively for us, and a mighty

nasty thing it was. Bang! bang! bang! and the bullets were heard whizzing about us, mostly, I am happy to say, passing over our heads, for the enemy were firing high and the aim was exceedingly bad. I fortunately found a little hollow of about nine inches in the ground, and this, with the aid of a big knife in my hands, I increased as much as I could, utterly forgetting that a bullet would go through the saddle that formed my pillow almost as easily as it would through a sheet of brown paper. Still, "where ignorance is bliss," &c. In the morning we found, however, that an officer had been killed while asleep, and another and a few men wounded. Some horses and camels were also struck.

By the side of me was an officer, and I heard a thud of a bullet as it struck his camp bed. It must have startled him, for I heard him call out "Hullo!—hang it!" How glad we were, and what a relief it was, when the morning dawned! Not that the enemy ceased firing, for the lighter it became the thicker came the bullets. Lieutenant Montessor sent down one of his men to ask me to go and breakfast with the Naval Brigade—a pleasant sort of arrangement under a hailstorm of bullets! Nevertheless, I went and joined them, and when I got there they all apologised, for they found that their water-skins had leaked and were quite empty, and that the men had just returned from the commissariat with empty water-bottles. I then wrote a chit to my servant, telling him to bring up one of my water-skins, and the delight of the officers is easily imagined when they suddenly found eight gallons of that simple liquid in their midst. I sat down behind some ammunition boxes and made a first-rate breakfast off bully beef, sardines, and cocoa. Montessor, with a devil-may-care sort of feeling, sat on top of the boxes and drank his cocoa as though he were in his own breakfast-room. I begged him to come down. "You will only get hit if you sit there."

"What does that matter, Prior? May as well be killed now as any other time." Sure enough, poor fellow, he was one of the first to be killed in the fight.

Even while breakfasting the order came to advance. General Graham had sent the cavalry out on the left, and he was now forming his men into two divisions, each in square formation. General Buller was in command of the 1st and General Graham himself in command of the 2nd. I was in the latter

square, and when I saw the cavalry falling back I knew too well what that betokened. In a very short time the Arabs, who had been in ambush and in great force, charged madly upon us. We halted, and the Gardiner guns opened a withering fire upon them, which seemed to check them for a time, but only for a time, as, urged on by their wild fanatical chiefs, they swooped down, a countless host, upon us. Then it was that the extraordinary order was given for the 42nd Highlanders to charge, which they did at the double, with a wild cheer. When I heard this order given I could not help thinking that it was in consequence of the regiment having taken the trenches at El Teb steadily, instead of charging as ordered, and thus making a big butcher's bill. It is not for me to question the wisdom of that order, though I retain my own opinion, but the immediate result was to open up the gaps in our square, to expose our guns to capture, and to doom those in charge of them to certain slaughter. At this moment immense hordes of Arabs charged down upon the square, the 65th wavered and began to fall back on the marines, and through the smoke could be seen the Naval Brigade doing their best, with their guns now being hopelessly abandoned. They were killed in numbers, some even trying to join us, and in most cases without success, for we were now retreating fast.

Somehow or other I never realised that we were falling back, and I stood as though petrified awaiting the 42nd and the Naval Brigade, until suddenly, to my horror, I found I was actually between the retreating column and the enemy. At that very moment an Arab loomed up close to me, and I saw him, spear in hand, just in the act of throwing it. Suddenly down it whizzed over my shoulder into the back of one of the 42nd, who fell to the ground with a groan, dead.

I then ran as hard as I could to get in amongst our men, who were falling back quickly. It was a terrible ten minutes, and the 42nd Highlanders suffered most awfully, 160 men and 10 sergeants being killed—standing back to back, and fighting for the honour of their regiment. Shall I ever forget it? I can even now see those brave Highlanders trying to force back a mass of savages. My God! what a ghastly sight it was!

General Graham and all the officers were doing their utmost to pull this terribly disorganised column together, while General



BATTLE OF TAMAI, MARCH 13, 1884.

Buller's square was steadily pouring in a withering flank fire, which stopped the enemy to a certain extent, and gave our men time to pull themselves together and to return to the charge. It was then that the enemy had a most awful time of it, for a terrific storm of bullets was poured in amongst them, and thousands of those brave Soudanese were laid low. There was no wavering now, no retreating, but a steady advance in line, all the men determined to regain the lost ground and guns, and to avenge their fallen comrades. The slaughter was immense, and the enemy, who had doubtless intended to annihilate us, were now being swept away as though by a scythe. Time after time they tried to re-form and to rush us once more, but hopelessly. Tommy Atkins, his blood fairly up, with rifle, bayonet, and sword already steeped in gore, hurled back the enemy in a confused mass right over the very donga whence they came. At the very beginning of the fight my servant, who was holding my horse, mounted it, and never stopped until he reached Suakim, a ride of some fourteen to sixteen miles.

After my escape with my life, and the return of the troops to the charge, I saw a horse about seventeen hands high trotting around. I succeeded in capturing him, and mounted, but how I got on his back is a puzzle I have never been able to solve to this day. My friends insist that I must have crawled up his legs; however, I did get on to his back, and, to my regret, found that it belonged to Major Etkin of the 42nd, who was killed in the first charge.

During the heat of the fight I saw the chaplain of H.M.S. *Euryalus*, who called me to help him. Giving him my stirrup to catch hold of, I dragged him out of the mêlée, and succeeding in capturing a donkey. He mounted it and rode to the rear, and declared afterwards that I had been instrumental in saving his life, for he was frightfully done up, poor man.

As soon as it was over, and one more victory registered for the British arms, I dismounted from my animal and went amongst the fallen enemy, making sketches of the field of battle, when some one suddenly called out, "Come away from there, Prior; we have just had a man killed!" Looking round, I actually noticed one of the enemy still living, crawling towards me, spear in hand, and as I made a sudden movement away, he, in his disappointment, threw it at me, fortunately

missing the mark, and I felt rather lucky that I had got out safely. Going over the ground, one had clear evidence of the remarkable way in which the Naval Brigade had stood by their guns. I saw an officer by his gun and six men round him ; all had been killed.

The enemy having had enough of it, fled in all directions, and General Graham, before returning to Suakim, went on to the village of Tamai, which we found was Osman Digna's stronghold and arsenal, most of the huts containing shells and ammunition of all kinds. As it was considered to be of no use to us, the huts were set on fire, and then we retreated and watched the effect. The small town of Sinkat was then relieved, and we returned once more to Suakim. The Arab chiefs had no doubt had a nasty knock, for they remained passive and quiet for some time, but the Mahdi in Khartoum was by no means settled. Certainly he had lost a few of his followers, but the fights at El Teb and Tamai did not have the slightest effect in quelling the Soudan rebellion.

CHAPTER IX

THE NILE EXPEDITION. 1884

THE British Government then struck on the brilliant but doubtfully wise idea of sending out gallant General Gordon, better known as "Chinese Gordon," who had been for some years very successful as Governor-General of the Soudan under the Khedive Ismail Pasha, to see what he could do towards quelling this unfortunate fanatical uprising. That he would not be successful in arranging terms with the Mahdi or persuading him and his followers to conform to the rule of the Egyptian Government, was an almost foregone conclusion, and it is greatly to be regretted that he was ever allowed to try, for the Mahdi simply spurned all overtures and actually detained General Gordon as a prisoner.

Then it was that the Home authorities realised that Egypt being threatened must be saved at all costs, and determined to send out a powerful expedition to crush this religious war. Many questions were raised as to which would be the best route, whether from Suakim to Berber, "where the question of water would have been very great," or via the River Nile. In the end the latter was decided on, and there was a large amount of pleasure and satisfaction expressed on all sides when it was known that Lord Wolseley would take up the command. The difficulties of the expedition were very great on account of the enormous distance the stores had to be transported. Lord Wolseley advanced the idea of having built special boats called whalers, in which stores could be loaded at the bottom, leaving room for a certain number of the troops on board, the intention being that the whole of the troops should sail and row up the Nile. But Tommy Atkins does not understand much about

sailing and rowing—his knowledge is about on a par with a raw recruit's acquaintance with a rifle. Canada was therefore asked to come to our assistance, and a large number of Canadians responded most willingly to the invitation. They knew every twist and turn of the cataract, they knew the rate of the current of the river, the best way to go clear of quicksands, shoals, and rocks; and there is no doubt but that for these men the expedition up the Nile would have taken much longer than it did.

I left England on September 6th, and was in Shepherd's Hotel, Cairo, when I received a telegram from Walter Ingram, brother of the managing proprietor of my paper, asking me to wait for him as he was coming to join me.

On arrival he said he had brought a small steam launch with him, with which he proposed to steam all the way up the Nile. This announcement seemed very jolly, but when I saw the little boat hauled out of the hold of the steamer I modified my ideas. It was an open yacht launch about nineteen feet long, with a little engine and screw that had to do 360 revolutions a minute to get it to travel nine knots in smooth water. The captain of the P. & O. steamer very soon had the boat slung into the harbour, and the engine transported into the Custom House shed; but the difficulty of getting the engine into the boat was a matter we had not calculated upon. We nearly killed two Egyptian porters out of eight during the process of fixing it in. At last the engineer, a man named Mitchell, whom Ingram had brought with him, fixed it all up and started getting up steam; then we took a kind of preliminary canter up the Suez Canal. Everything proving satisfactory, we then turned our attention to the luggage, and as there was not much room in the boat for it, we bought an extra boat which we saw on the beach, piled our luggage in it, put my dragoman on the top, and then, in great style and with many kind wishes from those who had watched us, we started off for Ismailia. By this time night had come on, and it was rather dark. We had not gone, however, much more than a couple of miles, when we heard a most plaintive scream from my dragoman, "Stop, sir, the boat is full of water, and I am drowning." On turning round, to our horror we found it was perfectly true, for the water was up almost level with the gunwale. Under the circumstances, we thought the best thing to

do was to run it ashore, which we did, and two or three natives on the bank assisted to unload. We then discovered that owing to the boat having been in the sun possibly for weeks and months, the seams just above the water-line were quite open, and the extra weight of the man had forced it down, so that the boat leaked like a sieve.

I then returned to Port Said in the launch and bought another larger and safer boat, and returned to the scene of the disaster, and once more we started on our way, and arrived safely in the open roads of Ismailia. How we escaped being wrecked many times with the buoys laid down, and how we ran alongside the correct stage on a pitch-dark night, I can't say. It was certainly more by good luck than judgment.

We managed to get into an hotel, and on the following morning the engineer told me he had no coal and did not know where to buy any, as the only coal in the place belonged to the Canal Company, and they would not sell. It was on this occasion that I first had the honour and pleasure of making the acquaintance of M. de Lesseps. I called at his house, and he received me very kindly, then readily gave me a letter to his agent, authorising him to furnish whatever coal we wanted.

We sent my dragoman on by rail to Cairo, and we started in the launch, via the Sweet Water Canal, for the same destination. This Sweet Water Canal is very much like an ordinary English one, and we enjoyed the day's steaming immensely, arriving at Tel-el-Kebir towards the evening.

The troops were now arriving in hundreds and thousands, and being forwarded to the front by rail and steamer as far as Assouan.

I found that Walter Ingram's idea of steaming all the way up the Nile would be far too slow a process for me, and that I should not be able to obtain the sketches necessary for my office, so I left him to his own devices and started off on my own account. Messrs. Thomas Cook and Sons had furnished me with what they thought was a most reliable dragoman, and I left by train for Assiout. Arrived there, I discovered that there would not be a boat to take me on to Assouan for three days.

At Assiout Colonel Morris was deputed by Lord Wolseley to purchase camels for the expedition, and it was most amusing to see him sitting at a table with the Mudir, or Governor, of Assiout at his side, and to watch how some of the rascally Egyptians would try and palm off seedy camels.

The Mudir was an exceedingly good judge of these animals, and under ordinary circumstances would have been only too delighted to "do" the British Government, but was constrained by circumstances, perhaps beyond his control, to be severely honest on this occasion. As the camels were purchased they were forwarded by boat on to Assouan, and from there travelled overland to Wady Halfa, for at the latter place it was that the British cavalry, both light and heavy, first became acquainted with the "ship of the desert."

At Assouan we had our first cataract to encounter, and here it was that the Manitoba boys, the Canadians, were called upon to exhibit their remarkable skill in the management of a boat in a rushing river.

At Bab-el-Kebir it was utterly impossible to sail up, and it was found necessary for the boats to be hauled up to the higher water; and here it was that Lord Charles Beresford had his chance. Great sailor that he is, and accustomed to all kinds of tackle and difficulties, he soon invented a means by which the boats could be hauled up a rush of water which it seemed impossible to face. As this was rather a slow process, and not quick enough to pass all the boats through, a service of portage was organised. The boats were taken out of the water, turned upside down, then placed on poles and raised on to the necks of the Egyptians, who were assisting us in the expedition. The boats were then carried a considerable distance to the higher water, and donkeys were used to carry spare oars and masts, the provisions out of the boats being also carried in a similar manner.

At Wady Halfa I had a mighty unpleasant experience. I was in a steam launch with Walter Ingram, and about eleven times we had tried to get through the rushing water round a certain point without success. At last we told the engineer to pile on the coal and to press down the safety valve and get up all the steam he could with all risks, and with another dash we made for it and just succeeded in what might almost be considered to be jumping up ten inches of water like a

salmon at a weir, and arriving in water a little quieter than the rest we made a rush through it; and a fine rush we made of it, for all at once the head of the boat swerved round. Bang! bang! and we were fairly on the rocks. We all three jumped out to lighten the boat, but unfortunately in doing so I missed my footing and slipped into the cataract and was gliding down the rushing water to certain death, when some Canadian boys on the bank, leaning over and holding on to each other, just succeeded in catching hold of my wrist as I was sinking and hauled me ashore.

I was very much done up, and was laid out on the bank in a half-drowned condition and the water pumped out of me. News of this kind travels like wildfire. Reuter's agent soon learnt that Melton Prior had been drowned at Wady Halfa. This, of course, was a nice piece of news for him, and was forthwith telegraphed to England, but my wife and friends had a different opinion of it when they read in the *Globe* newspaper an account of how I had been drowned, and further on an announcement that my paper was about to despatch another artist to replace me. My wife, not altogether believing in the account, cabled out to me, "Wire full details;" to which I replied, "No details; am all right."

I then thought that for a time I would change from the steam launch to camel-riding, and finding that the Guards' Camel Corps was about to cross the desert from Wady Halfa to Dongola, I joined them. On the road we made a halt at the village of Akasheh, and it was quite a treat to get a rest after about ten hours on board that "ship of the desert." Colonel Gleichen, Colonel Rowley, Sir William Gordon-Cumming and myself then made a tour round the village in search of milk and eggs. Jam we had in plenty, also condensed milk, but the chance of a little fresh milk was too much to be resisted. We found women grinding corn between two stones, and as we approached they appeared as though they had been accustomed to see us every day; they did not jump and rush away as one would have expected, but went on steadily with their work.

However, the sight of silver very soon produced the milk and eggs and a chicken or two. On the following day, we halted for luncheon in the middle of the desert. On this

occasion there was no village, water, eggs, or milk ; we were lying down to gain strength for the rest of the journey. Just then we saw in the distance a small cloud of dust, out of which as it came nearer we recognised the General, Lord Wolseley, on his ride to Dongola. He was mounted on a magnificent camel which had been presented to him by the Khedive. I may perhaps mention without wounding the feelings of Lord Wolseley that he was known out there to be one of the hardest riders in the force. Major Wardropp, his aide-de-camp, owned to me afterwards that he had a lively experience of the way our General rode about, for his skin suffered terribly in consequence.

After a short chat with the officers Lord Wolseley said good-bye, put his camel again into a trot, and started on ; but this animal did not seem particularly anxious to go forward at the moment, and made a sudden swerve as though to join our animals again. Lord Wolseley could not possibly under the circumstances keep his seat, and unfortunately fell to the ground. We all rushed up to him, but before we had got there he had remounted without any assistance, and seeing him look at me very hard I said, "I did not see you fall, sir." To this he replied, "Thank you, Prior," for he knew that I should not make a sketch of the undignified coming to earth of the Commander-in-Chief. It was generally acknowledged out there that the vitality of Lord Wolseley was something beyond the ordinary run of mortals, and this particular ride he undertook was said to be the fastest on record.

Mr. John M. Cook, who was head of the firm of Thomas Cook and Sons, the famous tourist agency, had proved of invaluable assistance to Lord Wolseley in his journey up the Nile, and there is no doubt that had it not been for Mr. Cook's forethought in establishing coal depôts and arranging for transport long before the expedition was a settled matter, the Commander-in-Chief would not have succeeded in getting his men to the front as quickly as he did. Mr. Cook was one of those quiet, charming, fascinating men with whom one could always enjoy a chat, for he was full of anecdote, and his conversation was thoroughly interesting. I scarcely know why, but he seemed to enjoy my society, and he constantly invited me to join him in his private dehabeah as we journeyed up the

Nile. I remember one night after dinner suggesting that we should have a game of penny nap to pass the time away, and whilst so engaged his favourite dragoman, Mohammed, looked on. It was really most amusing to me to watch the evident displeasure on his face whenever I won; in the end I was the winner of 18s. 6d., and ever after when I saw Mohammed or whenever he spoke of me to his master he always called me "Mr. 18s. 6d."

When the Camel Corps with which I was travelling arrived at Abu Fatmeh I thought I would like to join Walter Ingram again. I wanted to see how Tommy Atkins was managing the whale-boats up the Hanneck Cataract; for although it was not so rapid as the others it was still as difficult a part as any of the whole of the river on account of the many rocks and little islands. The boats, on account of the peculiar nature of the current and the extraordinary steering, very often came to grief. These boats had masts and sails, and under good management could make very big headway, but there were not enough Canadians to allow of one being in each boat, so that very often a soldier had to do the steering, while six men would row in a kind of independent spirit, utterly regardless of time or swing, and non-commissioned officers would be seen squatting on boxes of provisions at the stern trying to induce the men to pull together. But, in the excitement and confusion of approaching a dangerous or difficult part, they would pull just as they thought fit and catch crabs innumerable. Bump, bump, and sure enough the boat had struck a rock and sprung a leak, and in most cases would knock a hole in its side. The only thing to do then was to go alongside a bank as quickly as possible and unload before she sank. I must say the amount of cargo that they could each carry seemed extraordinary.

I was accompanying the first battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment at this particular time, and they seemed to be rather more unlucky than most, for any number of the boats had to be unloaded, and then hauled out of the river to undergo repair. This repair was certainly of a most primitive kind. The boat was turned upside down, and by means of pieces of tin, taken from biscuit boxes, and fresh-boiled tar she was made tolerably seaworthy, or rather I should say riverworthy again.

The troops suffered very severely from the constant rowing, and many of the men's hands became so wounded by the constant steering that they had to go under the doctor's care. Their clothes also suffered very severely in places, and for want of better material the men used to sew pieces of tin, commandeered from old commissariat boxes, to their nether garments, which they very facetiously said acted as a kind of sliding-board.

As soon as I arrived at Dongola I found that the General had taken up his headquarters in a large house just outside the town, and was waiting for the troops who were toiling up that long, rapid river. Only with their arrival could he make any further advance on Korti.

The Mudir of Dongola, who at one time was believed to have been one of the chief instigators of the Arab rebellion, and who no doubt had at least lent a strong countenance to it for his own ends, was a most steadfast believer in his religion. At least he apparently wished us to understand this, for the constancy of his praying was astonishing, but it was always done with great ceremony and very openly, no doubt with the idea of impressing us. Lord Wolseley was not to be entirely taken in by this kind of show, and eventually he succeeded in winning him to our cause.

We were informed that the General was going to pay a formal visit to the Mudir on a certain morning, so we correspondents hurried down to the Mudirate or palace of Dongola to see him arrive.

However sincere the Mudir might have been with regard to his religion, there is no doubt in my mind that he had a large vein of humour running through him, for he had arranged that as Lord Wolseley came under the gate and entered the large courtyard a mimic kind of Arab warfare should take place for his entertainment. About a dozen Arabs, apparently mad, armed with shield and spears and dressed in the most fantastic garments, pranced about to the accompaniment of yells and screams, and then on a sudden made a charge on Lord Wolseley and his Staff. These men had worked themselves up to such a frantic state of excitement, that really and truly when they rushed at Lord Wolseley I thought they meant it, and I imagined I saw the slightest wince on the part of our General as a man raised

his spear as though to thrust at him. I was quite pleased when I saw this extraordinary entertainment come to an end, and that a much more pleasant and dignified ceremony was to take place.

The General, dismounting from his horse, advanced to the Mudir, with whom he conferred for some time, and then invested him with ceremony with an Imperial order which raised him to the dignity of a Pasha of Egypt. Cups of coffee and sweets having been handed round, the visit came to an end, much, I should imagine, to Lord Wolseley's relief.

When I by force of circumstances had to pay a visit to the Mudir, I am very pleased to say I was not received in such a jocose manner.

I do not propose to describe the difficulties of the troops' journey from here to Korti; that is a matter of history, and so much has been written that it is quite unnecessary for me now to repeat anything. The headquarter Staff, the Commissariat Department, as well as the Intelligence Department had very hard work in pushing the troops along to Korti by water as well as road, and when the headquarter Staff travelled forward we correspondents followed up, and a very large camp was formed at Korti on the banks of the Nile. The natives from villages close by, finding out that we did not wish to rob them or confiscate their property, soon came in, and in a most friendly manner established a kind of market just outside our encampment. The heat here was very great, and it was only when the sun had gone down we used to journey out and buy for ourselves, and watch Tommy Atkins making his little purchases. There were for sale flour made of ground dhurra, which is a kind of millet, and which made excellent porridge, milk, vegetables of a kind, limes, bananas, and any amount of hot peppers. The natives as a rule are painfully ugly, but I made my purchases from an exceedingly pretty girl, and I made a very careful sketch of her while her brother, quite a lad, amused himself by combing her hair.

The object of the whole expedition was, if possible, to rescue General Gordon. Time was getting very short, for the General had sent faithful messengers with information, saying that if he was to be relieved it must be done at once. These men travelled over these desert wastes in hourly peril of their lives. The desert Arabs were so suspicious of any communica-

tion reaching Lord Wolseley from Khartoum, that they searched most carefully every one they met or suspected on the road. One of the communications was, I believe, written and then photographed so small that the print could be put into the shank of a button. When this arrived it was enlarged by photography.

Other messengers adopted various methods for carrying the little pieces of paper. In one case I was told a man actually cut his skin, inserted the paper, and waited for the skin to grow again.

As Lord Wolseley realised, and as he explained in his despatches home, to get to Khartoum by means of the River Nile all the way was impossible. He decided that a large Camel Corps should be formed to act as mounted infantry, and travel across the Bayuda Desert from Korti to Khartoum, and endeavour at all costs to rescue General Gordon. I am quite sure Lord Wolseley clearly saw the terribly hazardous and risky character of the expedition he was organising, and he must have had many sleepless nights and a cruelly anxious time as day after day the troops went out from the camp to be exercised, drilled, and trained in the use of the camel, in mounting and dismounting, in forming hollow squares, and in strange manœuvres of all kinds. These were necessitated by the change from horses to camel-riding. The men had to be taught how to make their animals kneel down quickly, and tie up their front legs so that they acted as a kind of bulwark, behind which the troops could engage an enemy, and, better still, resist the onslaught of an Arab charge. General Sir Herbert Stewart, a famous cavalry leader, was to command the column. The next senior officer was Sir Charles Wilson; Lord Charles Beresford went in charge of his Naval Brigade, and Colonel Frederick Burnaby was also to accompany the column. Then we had Lord Dundonald and Colonel Barrow. There were officers of Life Guards, Grenadier, Coldstream, and Scots Guards, Hussars, and any number of other regiments, many of whom had never seen a shot fired in anger—men accustomed to military shows in London and club life; but it was extraordinary—and we could not help remarking it—how magnificently these men of “blue blood” behaved in the most trying times of hardships and privations.

There was one great mistake made with regard to watering

the camels. Arabs only water theirs from once to twice a week; the consequence is that the animals are accustomed to take in a supply and fill their natural spongy receptacle sufficiently full to last them for that time. Unfortunately, with our usual humane feelings, our camels were sent down to water every day just as the horses were. The consequence was they only drank as much as they required for that day, and when we started off on this extraordinary and hazardous march the animals, instead of being able to go for four or five days or a week, were in sad trouble after the first day. It was said that there were wells all across the desert, but we found this to be absurd, for in most cases there was scarcely enough water for men, much less for camels.

At Korti, as in most cases when accompanying British troops in the field, the correspondents were assigned a position for their own camp, close handy to headquarters. H. H. S. Pearce of the *Daily News*, Frederick Villiers of the *Graphic*, and Charles Williams of the *Central News*, formed a joint mess, and made a common lot of their animals, servants, and provisions. The other correspondents were all independent of each other. Jack Cameron of the *Standard*, a well-trying man from north of the Tweed, who was never tired of letting us know it with pride, was sharp-eyed, impetuous, but keen as a razor at his work. Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*, who had fought for the independence of the South during the Civil War in America, bluff and kindly, with a heart far too big for his body, bursting with kindness and good-nature for those he liked, endowed with remarkable energy and pluck, and with as much knowledge of soldiering as most generals, was a striking figure. There were, too, the solemn Macdonald and the Hon. John Colbourne.

Colonel Swaine, who acted as Press censor, lived next to us. He was a charming man, and had that delightful knack of making each correspondent believe, as he presented his copy or telegram for perusal, that he was the only one in whom he was interested and whose telegram was correct in every detail.

What the expenses of the London morning papers with their telegrams must have been is too enormous to dwell on, and yet they all lived through it and are still running.

Sir William Ingram used to call me the "Illustrated Luxury," even without telegrams, simply because I travelled

in comfort. I wonder what the proprietors of the "dailies" called their representatives, who cost fifteen shillings a word plus comfort!

At last the momentous morning arrived when the column was to leave Korti and start across the comparatively unknown Bayuda Desert for Khartoum. What possibilities, what dangers, what privations, what horrors we were in for no one knew or cared. We were well mounted, and in good health and spirits.

Shortly after we had left Lord Wolseley and his Staff rode out for some distance by the side of the long stream of men, wishing us good luck and a safe return.

It was a formidable-looking column as it marched out with the commissariat and ammunition train and rearguard to pick up stragglers, and could not have been less than a mile in length. We only made a short march for the first day, just to get into working order, so to speak, but the following one was another matter, and we arrived at the so-called Wells of Abou Halfa pretty well done up.

Every man, as well as officers, had left Korti with a skin of water fastened to his saddle, but unfortunately most of them being new were found to have leaked very badly. This, added to many of the men's carelessness in fixing them, as well as improvidence, caused a large amount of trouble, for there was very little water to be found in these wells, and it was not long before the stock was exhausted.

The first thing to be done was to replenish the store of the transport, and then the men were allowed to approach in batches; but even this was a most difficult matter to arrange. Many of the native drivers, with their natural indifference, made a dash, and even waded into the pool, but these were very soon hauled out, and in many cases rather severely handled.

The camels, in consequence of the way in which they had been watered, as already mentioned, actually threw some of their riders in their mad desire to get at the water, and it became quite a serious business to get them in hand.

Although I had a camel for carrying water only, I found I was running short. My servant and camel-drivers had evidently tampered with it, but seeing a man with a skin,

possibly going to headquarters or elsewhere with it, I offered him ten shillings, and the exchange was made on the spot.

The skins being new, the water rolling about in them became so tanned that in most cases it resembled either claret or ink in appearance. This reminds me that at these wells a man came up to me; he could scarcely speak, but just succeeded in saying, "Can you give me a drink, sir?"

I said, "No; I have no water to give away."

"Oh! sir; take my purse and give me a drink," and he opened it and showed me gold inside.

"Put that purse away, man! What do you mean by it? Yes, you shall have a drink," and I emptied my water-bottle into his pannikin, but when he saw the colour of it he said, "Is this water, sir?"

"Yes; drink it up; I have been drinking the same kind all night," but he actually smelt it and hesitated before quenching his horrible thirst.

Those at home, with all the water they require, cannot understand what privation means; how a man's tongue will swell and he will be brought to the state in which he cannot even speak.

On the march it was quite etiquette to refuse a drink. Many times on visiting the Guards and other regiments the officers have asked me to have a drink as though at their club, but I have always refused. "No, thank you; I don't require one." Possibly all the time I was longing for it.

To prevent men stealing water from my camel I put the skins into potato sacks, and on the road I often heard fellows say, "What a luxurious fellow Prior is, carrying potatoes!" They little knew it was only water.

At night when we halted I used to have it put carefully under my bedstead, sleeping with my revolver round my waist; and I always told my men that if they came near me, or I caught them near the water, I would shoot them like dogs.

On the march the column was always astir and away at sunrise, halting at midday for an hour and then on again until nightfall, and so we continued until our arrival at the Wells of Gakdul.

"Wells" of Gakdul is surely a misnomer, for there are not any wells at all, not even springs, but simply clefts in the rocks into which the rain-water from the hills higher up runs down

and settles. There were two receptacles or basins ; the lower one, being pronounced by the doctors as unfit for human beings on account of the amount of living organisms, was handed over for the benefit of the camels and horses, but the water in the upper basin was found to be quite good and perfectly pure.

It seemed a very funny but welcome freak of nature that in the middle of an arid desert, without the slightest sign of anything to lead one to expect the presence of water, there should be these two splendid supplies.

Anxious to carry still more water for self and servants if possible, and as I could not buy extra skins, I suddenly thought of my waterproof sheet. Cutting small holes all round the edges, I slipped rope in and out, thus forming a large bag, into which I poured ten to twelve gallons, and having fastened it up as tightly as I could, succeeded in getting this bag into a potato sack. This made a splendid reserve of rare good water, which I meant to keep as a last resource.

A fort was built and a guard left behind to hold these wells, and then haversacks, skins, and water-bottles having been replenished, the column set out once more. This time we had the certain knowledge that it would not be long before we should come up with the enemy, for the Intelligence Department had received information that they were in force at the Abu Klea Wells. We were not likely to be caught in a trap, for the 19th Hussars were scouting in grand style, so much so that I heard Colonel Barrow was over and over again complimented for the way in which his regiment performed the duties of scouts.

It was in the afternoon of January 16th that Colonel Barrow sent word back to General Stewart to say he had come up with the enemy and was watching them. The column was then halted, and when I saw our men examining their cartridge belts and replenishing them from their reserve store in paper wrappers (for in riding many of the cartridges fell or were jolted out of the bandoliers), I could not help feeling that we were in for it.

I cantered on ahead and joined the General and Major Wardrope, his aide-de-camp, on the top of a hillock and found them very busy with their field-glasses, while Colonel Barrow pointed out the position of the enemy.

General Stewart soon determined on his line of action, and

the column was ordered to advance and take up a position in the open to the right of where we were standing. It was too late to attack that night, so we were formed into a square, and a zareeba made as quickly as possible, every man lending a willing hand. The Guards made a stone wall in our front, the officers working as hard as any one at it, for it was very doubtful whether the enemy would attack us that night or leave us in peace to go for him in the morning.

We who remembered the night before Tamai questioned very much if we should be left in peace to sleep or not. Our doubts were fully justified, for as the sun went down and the shades of night were closing around us we received our first shots from a hill on our right. The order was then passed round that we were to lie low and not to fire a shot in return.

What a ghastly night it proved to be!—if possible even worse and more unpleasant than the night before Tamai. In that case most of the shot went overhead, but on this occasion the bullets came plumping in from the hills.

I was standing chatting with Colonel Burnaby and another officer, and we had heard the ping of bullets several times, when the Colonel calmly observed, "I think some rascal has got our range; we had better continue our conversation some distance apart." But I was not sorry when we separated altogether and I was able to take a little shelter. It was about time for something to eat, and my man brought me a tin of bully beef and some biscuits, but dining in the open with lumps of lead whizzing about and an occasional thud as a bullet hit a camel, or the sand spluttered up at one's feet, was not altogether agreeable. I was much amused watching my man sitting by a fire boiling water to make me some coffee, when a bullet splashed into it, knocking over the kettle and upsetting the water. As calmly as possible he remade the fire, put on more water, and eventually brought me my coffee, simply saying, "Sorry so late, sir, but water took a very long time to boil."

Sleeping under the circumstances was also a little awkward, but we took what cover we could find. I lay by the side of a camel until he received a nasty whack, and then he wriggled and grumbled so much that I was obliged to

change my position for fear he rolled over me—overlying, I believe, is the proper word.

I have often thought when campaigning how much I would have preferred being at home and in my own little bed, instead of lying out in the open on the hard sand staring at the Milky Way with the stars of heaven as a canopy, while being plugged at by a man with whom I had no quarrel—in fact, did not even know by sight. But such is life, and of course if I am stupid enough to follow Tommy Atkins I must share his luck. It is not all beer and skittles.

Several times during the night the enemy came up so close that we had to stand to arms, and I feel sure I was not the only one who was glad when daybreak came and the troops were formed to go out and once more avenge that cruel swish, phew, and ping of the “all-night bullets.”

A kind of fort as a hospital had been made of meat and biscuit boxes piled up, and the baggage camels were all huddled together with the native drivers in charge lying close, while as many men as could be spared were left as a guard. Then the General formed up the remainder of the troops into a square formation, but even while doing so a number of the men were killed and wounded by a heavy cross-fire from the hills on either side. At last, however, we set out doggedly but cautiously over the undulating ground. The skirmishers had been instructed that as soon as they came in contact or in sight of the enemy they were to fall back steadily on the flanks of the square and not on the face, but unfortunately the Arabs, jumping up suddenly from a donga, so startled them that in their haste to return they forgot all about their instructions, and rushed back on our front, thus utterly preventing the troops from firing on the Fuzzy Wuzzies who were following them.

By one of those curious chances a large number of the enemy made for our weakest corner, and actually succeeded in breaking into the square at this particular point just as the Gardner gun under Lord Charles Beresford became jammed. The enemy made straight for the wounded, who were slung on the camels, and killed nearly every one of them. The hand-to-hand fighting and confusion for the time were terrific; but there is one thing to be said—not one of the Arabs that got inside left the square alive.

The true story of this fight I do not believe has ever been written, and not being a descriptive writer I do not propose to attempt to show how, to save the rest of the square, both friend and foe had to share the same fate at the corner that was broken in—it was swept clear by our cross-fire. Lord Charles told me personally that it was a marvel how he escaped. Three times when trying to unjam the gun he was knocked over by the impetuous rush of the enemy, and at last lay there partly stunned.

It was in this fight that Colonel Burnaby was killed while performing a gallant action which, had he come out of it alive, would surely have gained for him the V.C. Seeing two men hard pressed by the enemy, he rushed out on horseback to their assistance, and it was while his sword was doing its mighty and deadly work that one of the enemy succeeded in getting round him and stabbed him in the back of the neck with his spear. It was his death-blow, but he had saved the two men.

The enemy now seemed to waver, for our fire was terrific as volley after volley was poured in amongst them, and they fell back in hopeless confusion—flying in all directions.

On passing over the Arab ground it was evident how great had been the slaughter; unfortunately we had also suffered very severely, for we lost nine officers and sixty men killed.

The battle being over, the force set out for the Wells of Abu Klea, the General sending back instructions that the remainder of the column with the baggage, &c., should join him on the following morning. We took a few prisoners, and they were thoroughly interrogated by one of our interrupters, one of them actually having the cheek to boast that he was said to be a crack shot and had been firing at us all night.

As soon as the fight was over the correspondents were very hard at work getting their telegrams ready, but the question was how to forward them.

I sat on the ground making my sketch with a candle stuck between my feet and Cameron sprawling beside me, both wondering how we were to get our work down country. We had arranged before leaving Korti with a Mr. Rees, a contractor who supplied fresh meat to the troops by bringing up cattle all the way in dehabeahs and then marching them overland as far as they could travel, and he agreed to honour our chits or

cheques to any amount up to £100. Cameron and myself now, while working, sent our scouts around to see if they could find any camel-drivers who were not wanted who would carry our dispatches through to Gakdul and then on to Korti. At last we obtained one, and the enormous price of £50 was promised him for the ride, which undoubtedly was a most risky one. We gave him £15 in cash to prove our bona fides and a cheque for £35, to be paid on arrival by Mr. Rees, with instructions to sneak out at night and endeavour to get through any of the enemy that might be around us.

We heard later on he arrived quite safely at Gakdul, but there the stupid idiot could not resist the temptation of boasting to other natives about his ride and what he was making over it, even going to the extent of showing them the gold he had received already from us. He then left Gakdul, but never arrived at Korti; without doubt he was killed and robbed by the chums to whom he had been boasting. Worse than that, Cameron's despatches and my sketches never arrived in England, which explains why the *Standard* did not have any telegrams from their own special correspondent. Fortunately for me, I had had my doubts, and kept a slight tracing, which I sent on to England at a later date, and no doubt Cameron would have forwarded a copy had he not unfortunately been killed in the next fight.

When, on the following morning, I met some of the officers of the Guards, I expressed my regrets at the heavy loss they had sustained. "Please don't speak about it" was the quiet reply, and I realised how thoroughly those brave men felt the loss of their pals.

Having buried the dead and served out fresh ammunition, water, and provisions, the column was once more formed up, and at half-past one we started on the march and kept steadily on till dark, every one in doubt as to whether we should halt for the night or keep straight on.

We were now fairly in the enemy's lair, and he was no doubt watching us, although the 19th Hussars were still scouting in magnificent style. The General, perhaps thinking the Arabs after the smashing they had had the day before would require some little time to reorganise, decided to continue, and the word was passed along that the column would march on through the night. It was indeed a dark one. The

men, tired with the fight, excitement, and hard marching, were constantly falling asleep on their animals, and falling off them in consequence. Camels are a good height, and it is not at all a pleasant sensation to roll off and come thumping down on to the ground. Twice did I go through this silly performance; the first time I held on to the head-rope of the animal and easily hauled him down and remounted, but my second experience was bad: I rolled over on the sand and my camel was gone. I picked myself up quickly and ran in amongst the crowd of animals calling out, "Lost my camel! lost my camel!" until at last I heard what seemed to me a heavenly voice—"Here you are, sir!"

"Where?"

"Here."

"But where are you?"

"Here, sir, on the left," and no one, unless he has been in the same straits, would appreciate my feelings when I once more got hold of my camel's head-rope. A bluejacket had caught him. The reward of a good pull at my whisky flask brought forth the simple thanks, "Aye, aye, sir, that's jolly fine; I'd like to be catching camels all night, sir."

It was such a dark night that the column gradually got into a shocking confusion, and it was impossible to tell who was beside you. I would ask, "Who are you?"

"Scots Guards, sir."

"Where is your company?"

"Don't know, sir."

And so we went on without the least knowledge as to where the enemy was or what we were next to face. No smoking was allowed and we were not even supposed to talk.

An extraordinary thing now occurred. We had to go through a small forest, and the head of the column having lost the road or badly led on purpose by our native leader, swerved to the left and gradually came in contact with the tail of the column without realising it, the consequence being that we kept on going round and round in a circle for about two hours, and it was only as morning broke that the General was able to extricate the column from this remarkable medley and sort the men into their proper regimental positions again. This work was scarcely finished when news came from Colonel Barrow that the enemy was to be seen in force in our front.

As soon as I heard this I said to Cameron, who was by my side, "By jove, old chap, we are in for another fight, and I don't like the idea of it at all."

Then turning to me he said, with what appeared to be almost anger, "If you don't like it, if you are funking, why did you come? You had better go back!"

I was fairly astonished at my dear friend expressing such sentiments, and it flashed through my mind he had a presentiment of coming danger. Once more he looked at me in an inexpressible fashion that was his own, then we rode on in silence and never exchanged another word.

We were now about four miles from the Nile, and the General decided to halt and form a zareeba of camels as soon as possible. I heard him say, "This position will do for me."

As the Arabs did not seem inclined to come on at once, the order was given for the men to get their breakfast, but there was not much time allowed for this meal. At about seven o'clock the enemy opened fire from a range of at least 1,400 yards, to which we immediately replied with interest, the machine guns being brought into play. Everything was done to try and induce them to come to closer quarters, but without success, and so the battle raged for nearly seven hours, during which time our force was being considerably reduced by the numbers of killed and wounded.

A kind of fort was built of meat and biscuit boxes in the middle distance. It was very nasty and risky work for the men carrying the boxes across the intervening open space from our zareeba. Lord Dundonald was in charge of the operation, and Bennet Burleigh, most energetic with advice, lent a willing hand. It was at this spot, whilst giving instructions and examining the enemy's position through field-glasses, that General Sir Herbert Stewart received his mortal wound in the groin; the news came upon us as a thunderbolt. The firing was so heavy that all the correspondents save one had been hit.

Pearse and myself were chatting with Bennet Burleigh when we heard a tremendous thud, and Burleigh yelled out, "Pick it out, Prior! pick it out!" at the same time clawing at his neck. I said, "There is nothing to pick out."

"Pick it out, idiot!"

Surely enough a ricochet bullet had struck him in the

muscle just under the ear, and soon raised a great black lump half the size of a chicken's egg, but the shock and pain were so great that he would not believe me that there was nothing to pick out. He was soon pacified, however.

Shortly after this I was sitting down behind a camel, getting something to eat and chatting with Villiers, when I saw Lord Charles Beresford walking by us with as happy a smile as though he were in the Park, quite indifferent to the lumps of lead flying about him.

At the same moment a bullet caught the instep of my boot, tearing it open, and then struck the heel of Villiers' boot as he sat cross-legged beside me.

"I tell you what, Villiers, it is looking very nasty," I said, and as I stretched out my hand to emphasise my remark I received a ricochet bullet on the ball of my thumb, the effect of which I can feel to this day, for it injured the muscle. Then turning round I received another in a softer part of my body, so I had my share of the entertainment, though luckily nothing very serious.

Pearse received a whack which made him jump and limp, but the great loss to all of us was the death of my dear friend, John Cameron. He had been very serious from the commencement of the fight, and did not appear to like the situation at all. He was sitting between camels eating sardines and biscuits when he received the fatal bullet and, with one gurgling sigh, fell back dead. At first I could not believe it, but turning him over I found a small hole in his coat where the bullet had entered and broken his vertebræ. We placed him amongst the dead. On the following morning we correspondents decided that we would bury him ourselves instead of employing the ordinary fatigue party. Burleigh, Pearse, Macdonald, Villiers, and I carried him down to the grave that had already been dug and placed him there with our own hands, while Lord Charles Beresford, in a most impressive manner, read the Burial Service for us.

I must return once more to the fight. By two o'clock matters had assumed a very serious aspect. Our only General was in hospital, officers and men were falling fast, and the enemy did not seem at all disposed to come to closer quarters, so it was therefore absolutely necessary that we should take the initiative.

Colonel Sir Charles Wilson as next senior officer held a council of war with Lord Charles Beresford, Colonel Barrow, and several officers of the Guards. It was decided to form a square of all the available men and to march out straight for the main force of the enemy, which was between us and the Nile, and evidently determined to oppose our reaching the much-longed-for water. As an instance of what a withering fire we were under, no less than twenty-five men were killed while this square was being prepared and formed up for the attack.

Bennet Burleigh then got hold of Harry Pearse and myself and said he was going to ride back to Gakdul Wells with his despatches, and as Pearse agreed to accompany him I did the same—but with very different feelings, for I had personally come to the conclusion that the game was up, and that it was going to be another case of Hicks Pasha and the total annihilation of the force, and that the only chance left was a ride for life to the rear. We then went in search of our ponies, but before mounting we three shook hands and swore that we would get through or die together. If one was wounded the others were to stand by him to the death—a much more awful situation than I realised at the time, but we were all very determined to carry out our word. Villiers and Ingram thought the risk we were taking even worse than remaining, and with tears in their eyes shook my hand and wished me God-speed. Having mounted our animals, we started quietly at first, Burleigh riding on my left and Pearse on my right. We knew we had to pass through a small forest and then we quickened our pace, Burleigh saying, “There is a line of skirmishers in front, and once we get through them we are all right.” Putting our animals at a hard gallop, we did get safely past them, though the bullets rained around us, but on emerging from the other side of the forest I espied cavalry. “Great heavens! look, Burleigh, there’s cavalry on the right—and yes, more on the left; they are trying to surround us! We can’t face that lot; we shan’t have the smallest chance; we must return.” And the others, seeing the impossibility of us three getting past fifty fanatical Arabs well mounted, agreed that we should return to the square.

Once more we had to face those skirmishers, who were no doubt closing up, and we this time put our ponies into

a mad gallop. Just as we were coming out of the forest into the open I saw a fallen tree in front of me. Momentarily I questioned whether my animal would jump it or not. There was, however, no time to stop and go round it, so lifting up his head he cleared it like a deer—another short gallop and we had safely arrived within the zareeba. Here an officer met us and said he thought he had just saved our lives, for some of the 19th Hussars, seeing us come along, took us for three fanatical Arabs, and were just about to give us a volley when he stopped them, and assured them we were only correspondents and not mad. On examination we found all our ponies had been hit.

And now our whole attention was directed towards the square. The men marched forward with teeth clenched, grasping their rifles, determined to do or die and uphold the glory, prestige, and tradition of the British arms; for surely it was a case of victory or death—nay, of annihilation itself—but their hearts never faltered for a moment. Their faces never blanched, though pulses may have quickened and muscle grown tense as they saw the enemy from a distance of five hundred yards prepare to swoop down like an avalanche upon the little valorous band, for such it truly was.

Our square consisted of only 800 men all told, and although the flanks were moved out to act with the front face, there could not have been more than 400 engaged in the fight. All were ordered to fire only by word of command—the front rank kneeling.

Four hundred men only! Think of it! And a fanatical host of from 10,000 to 12,000 with waving banners, yells, and flashing spears, caring nothing for death, willing to die—glad to die at the hand of the infidel—surging down over the sand like a mighty inundation against the solid little square which received its impact as if it had been a rock. Three times were they sent reeling back as volley after volley was poured into them. Three times they rallied, but in vain. The desert sand was three deep with their slain. The British square was invincible and as steady as on parade. Then came a sudden stampede. The enemy bolted, panic-stricken, and such cheers as only ring from British throats rose to the very welkin, and the square, in perfect order, pushed on for the Nile and there encamped for the night.

It was now a very busy scene in the zareeba, getting the

transport in order so as to be ready to march and join the fighting column early in the morning. We were one and all elated beyond measure at the way in which the square had smashed up the enemy's vigorous onslaught. We had all looked upon it as a most serious undertaking, and when we saw the success of it I must say we were delirious with joy. Lots of handshakes and congratulations were passing around, while an extra pint of water was served out to us all as a kind of thanksgiving. However, every arrangement had to be made to resist a chance surprise by the enemy, and Lord Charles, Colonel Barrow, and other officers were very energetic in arranging the few troops we had for this purpose. There were a large number of sick and wounded, who would have to be very carefully carried, and unfortunately this was a very serious item to be dealt with, so much so that an order was passed round to ask for volunteers from the non-combatants to assist in the duty.

Bennet Burleigh, as strong as a lion, suggested that he and I should offer our services to carry some of the wounded; we also put most of our native servants in collar for work. The slight damage to my hand did not so much matter as there was a strap from the stretcher which went round my neck.

I should like to here mention a delicate matter, and I do so with the deepest respect for the dead. I had unfortunately had a slight difference with General Sir Herbert Stewart at the close of the campaign in Egypt in 1882. He accused me of sketching Arabi Pasha in prison at Cairo against his express orders, but although I assured him I had not heard or received any such orders, and even mentioned the names of several officers who were with me at the time, and who were as innocent as myself with regard to the knowledge of any order, he still persisted that I had been told I was not to sketch. In the end I was proved innocent. Nevertheless, he did not forgive me, much to my sincere regret. Now, when I saw him lying on the stretcher badly wounded, I felt particularly sad, remembering that at one time we had been such good friends. I approached him and ventured quietly to express my deep-felt sorrow not only for his present state but for the very regrettable misunderstanding in the past. Looking me straight in the eyes as he lay there, he put his hand on my arm, and taking my hand in his he simply remarked with a

feeble smile, "Yes, Prior, that's all right; I understand now," and with the smallest pressure of his fingers I left him, for I would not have been able to control my feelings much longer. This was the last I ever saw of one of the finest cavalry officers who ever lived, who was much beloved, and whose loss was much regretted by all who had known him.

Fortunately our march down to the Nile was undisturbed by the enemy. We travelled very slowly luckily enough, otherwise I should never have been able to get through with my task. Carrying the dead weight of a wounded man four miles through loose sand is no trifling matter, with a blazing sun pouring down on you. It was all very fine for Burleigh to keep on saying, "Come on, Prior, wake up!" but I really could not. I am just reminded that about four years afterwards I was in Burmah, when a soldier came up and saluted me, saying, "Will you excuse me, sir, for the liberty of stopping you. Possibly you do not recollect me, but I am the man you and Mr. Burleigh carried wounded from the fight at Abu Klea to the Nile. I thanked you then, sir, but now that I am well I should like to take the opportunity of again thanking you for the careful way in which you carried me." This was quite nice of the man, I thought, and I felt very pleased. But this is only one of the side-issues of life; such gratitude is rare.

Once arrived at the Nile, the wounded were made as comfortable as possible, and we correspondents all encamped together and did the best we could under the circumstances. We had no tents to shelter us from the glare of the sun. As night came on the enemy showed great activity, for horsemen galloped all round our position. It was even mooted that they were preparing for another attack upon us, and a very strict watch was therefore kept on them. Colonel Wilson, after another council of war, decided to go out on the following morning and attack the village of Metemneh, but I am sorry to say little came of it, for the houses being built of mud and wattle, shells and bullets had very little effect upon it. The Arabs fired through windows and loopholes, and we being out in the open had a very unpleasant time. It was not long before the idea of taking Metemneh was given up, and we retired on our position at Elgubat and the Nile, and there we remained for ten days, fully expecting that the Mahdi

with the main body of his army would come and have a go at us.

The next thing was to get some one to carry despatches to Lord Wolseley at Korti. Lieutenant Piggott undertook the ride. I was known to have a very fast and strong camel, and Piggott came down one morning to ask if I would sell it to the Government, which I was eventually persuaded to do for the sum of £35.

One morning I was startled by a great commotion in camp; fellows were running in every direction, and turning out of my shelter, where I had been at work, and looking up the river, I saw four extraordinary-looking things coming down. They were evidently boats, for they had funnels, and any amount of black smoke was pouring out. The natural question was, Are they friend or foe? Was Gordon on board, or had Khartoum fallen? They soon arrived opposite to us, and then casting anchor swung round. They looked exactly like the London County Council penny steamboats turned into floating forts by means of railway sleepers and sheet iron, and contained those who had remained faithful to Gordon Pasha and the British cause. The Commander-in-Chief was Kashem-el-Moos, a fine-looking old Egyptian, who wore with great pride at his breast an exact impression of the Medijeh which Gordon Pasha had manufactured out of lead for want of better material and presented to his faithful adherents, according to rank.

I do not know whether I ought to own it with pride or shame, but, anxious to obtain such a curio as this was, I succeeded in inducing two of the minor officers to exchange theirs for English gold. Two pounds ten shillings each was the price, and one of these, together with a bank-note value two Medijehs, also issued by Gordon Pasha, and redeemable at par by the British Government, I framed. These are now facing me as I write.

The steamers then came alongside the bank, and the General had a long conference with our council of War, and, I believe, announced that Khartoum had fallen. Sir Charles Wilson thereupon decided on the following morning to go up and reconnoitre and find out what was the best thing to be done if possible to save that grand old soldier, Chinese Gordon. As soon as I heard of this expedition I made up my

mind I would go up at all costs. I was refused permission at once, but there was some little time before the steamer was to leave, so I sneaked on board and hid myself in the fore-castle. Unfortunately, to my dismay and disgust, I was discovered and requested to land. As many of the troops as could possibly be accommodated were put on board, and everything being in order Sir Charles Wilson started with the intention of rescuing Gordon if possible. That he was not successful in doing so is history, as is also the fact that, after a fierce engagement outside Omdurman, his steamer was wrecked, and that he and his crew had to take refuge on the Island of Monat. Major Stuart Wortley then started in one of the steamer's small boats, with two men to row, and arrived at our position in the dead of night with the news that Khartoum had fallen, that Gordon Pasha was dead, and that Sir Charles Wilson's steamer had been wrecked. Upon this Lord Charles Beresford immediately made ready one of our remaining steamers and started off to his assistance. Unfortunately Lord Charles had lost nearly all his officers on the march, so he engaged Mr. Walter Ingram to act as one of his lieutenants, and I should mention that Lord Charles bore testimony and spoke most highly of the zealous part taken in this last exploit by his new lieutenant. On this occasion I was allowed to accompany the expedition, and under a severe fire witnessed the rescue of Sir Charles and his brave little crew. Then I returned to England.

CHAPTER X

THE BURMESE CAMPAIGN. 1887

AFTER a short rest in England I once more received marching orders, this time for Burmah. The Government at home, no less than the Government of India, had for some time been in a state of anxiety with respect to the disturbances in that country, and a punitive expedition was being organised.

After an interesting trip to Bombay we were transhipped on to the British-Indian mail steamer for Rangoon, where I found people in a state of as much excitement and anxiety about what was happening up country as was compatible with the somewhat lethargic habits into which the European falls in Oriental climes.

Mandalay had long been the capital of Burmah, and until we took possession of the country—"annexed," I believe, is the proper word—its Government was incredibly despotic, all life and property being at the absolute disposal of the person who happened to be reigning sovereign.

It will be enough if I mention now that the brutal excesses of King Theebaw in 1879 led to the withdrawal of our ambassador and staff, and that a long series of insults to British residents and injuries done to British commerce led to a determination on the part of the British Government to put an end once and for all to a state of things that had become intolerable alike to Burmese people and the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries.

An ultimatum from the British-Indian Government was forwarded to King Theebaw, and was answered by him by a lengthy document, in which he had the impudence to say that all foreign traders might ask his protection as a favour, and that he would not grant any special favours for the security

of British residents. It was therefore considered necessary and decided that persuasion with the aid of the sword should be resorted to, in order to compel this "golden-footed Lord of the White Elephant" to change his tactics.

The strength of the standing Burmese army was known to be about 10,000 men, but lacking in artillery and cavalry. In one respect the Burmese soldier had a decided advantage over the more civilised foe: he practically provided his own commissariat. At one end of his rifle he carried his sleeping-mat, at the other his cooking-pot, around his waist he carried a supply of rice, and for other provisions he relied on the resources of the country through which he passed.

In a previous war the Burmese caused any amount of trouble by setting loose fire-boats freighted with highly inflammable material, but in these days a shot or two would soon have drowned these floating infernos. However, under the impression he was going to stop an expedition being sent against him, the King ordered a lot of junks to be filled with stones and sunk across the river, but had not had time to complete the task before our arrival.

King Theebaw was certainly neither a Royal statesman nor a Royal hero. He never quitted the precincts of his palace at Mandalay, where he used to massacre at his pleasure any suspected persons of his own kindred or court, men, women, and children. I was told by an English lady, who had been a personal friend of the Queen, and who knew everything which took place in the palace, that should the King and Queen have gone for an afternoon's pleasure cruise in their state barge on the river, they might, on their return, have found some relative in possession of the palace and themselves prisoners, to be tortured or killed according to the fancy of the usurper.

On November 17th General Prendergast, who was in command of the expedition, attacked and captured, after three hours' fighting, the forts at Monhla, Lieutenant Drury, attached to the 11th Bengal Infantry, being killed while gallantly leading his men. Surgeon Heath received a mortal wound at Sayaing while carrying a wounded brother officer—Lieutenant Armstrong—off the field.

Lieutenant Cockram was shot dead while he and Lieutenant Lye and seventy men were attacking a band of dacoits near Sayaing.

We continued to advance up the Irrawaddy, though impeded by the low water at Pagan. An earthwork was stormed and then a small town was captured, the enemy being driven out by the shelling of the gunboats, but there was very little serious fighting. The British carried everything before them, the forts at Ava, the last before we reached Mandalay, having thrown up the sponge rather than risk a fight or bombardment. The King agreed on the 27th to surrender his army, together with his forts, guns, and capital, and it became then a simple matter for the British troops to arrive at and enter Mandalay and for General Prendergast to capture the King.

The Burmese were very poorly off for guns, and with these only fired round-shot. Evidently they had never heard of such things as shells, for they complained bitterly that we fired rotten shot at them; so rotten, in fact, that when they fell on the ground they broke up and flew into pieces, killing a lot of men who were near them.

The steamer that I went up by took nearly eight days, some three of which we spent hard and fast on sandbanks. The river at certain times of the year runs at a terrific pace, over five knots an hour, and the sandbanks are constantly shifting in consequence, so that the river pilots are pretty well engaged in taking soundings as the channel changes so frequently.

At last we arrived at the city of Mandalay, which is very curious, and in many respects impressive for an Eastern town. It measures about one mile square, with high brick loopholed walls, and is surrounded by a moat which contained very large fish, said to be sacred; they would actually come up to be fed by the hand. The climate is very healthy, and the women very handsome and petite, with lovely figures.

In the centre of the city was the royal palace, occupying a space a quarter of a mile square, in which King Theebaw, who was addicted to gin, was very indolent and fat, and troubled himself very little with the business of his kingdom, resided with his two wives who were sisters. It was here that all his despotic mandates were issued, and where he indulged in those furious debaucheries that had brought about the present state of affairs.

General Prendergast was accompanied by Colonel E. B. Sladen, an officer who during his sojourn in Mandalay as Political Agent had always been on most friendly terms with

the King. He was undoubtedly one of the best authorities on Burmese affairs. Having been so successful up to the present and having captured the city and palace, the General was most anxious also to capture the King. But His Majesty kept on retreating until at last he took sanctuary in a summer pavilion in the palace garden. Here he was discovered seated at an opening in the low platform or verandah with a huge golden spittoon by his side. He looked fat, heavy, and unintelligent. The Queen crouched behind the King. The Queen-Mother, one of the wives of Theebaw's father, the only one who had escaped death at the general massacre of the old court, sat by her side.

To his right squatted the royal ministers with lowered heads, it being a great crime to even look at the King. His favourite servants, on whom he had lavished large sums, had run away the night before, and left him even without food. How were the mighty fallen !

The General, after all the trouble he had gone through, was in no humour for lingering upon the order of the Royal going, being anxious to get his captive off as soon as possible to the steamer. He therefore informed him that he would give him ten minutes, neither more nor less, to prepare to leave his palace. It is difficult to realise what must have passed through the King's mind as the General stood by his side with his watch in his hand. Theebaw, with all the mighty power he had wielded as the head of the Church and everything else, having to leave his kingdom in ten minutes, not knowing what would become of him, not even knowing whether he would be hanged or shot. He did ask that his life might be spared, and this having been assured he and his wives and their attendants turned their attention to the collection of all the valuables they could get—jewels and precious stones and all portable property. The ten minutes having elapsed, he was quickly hurried off. Unfortunately those in charge of him lost their way and took the wrong road and were for some time perplexed. Eventually, however, they struck the right road, which led down to the bank where the steamer was already alongside. One need not be surprised at the difficulty when we remember that we were in a strange and difficult town at the dead of night, and with some fear of the Burmese attempting in force to rescue their king and governor. The King, Queen,

and their exiles had to walk a plank from the bank to the steamer, which very shortly afterwards steamed away, and in the end Treebaw and his companions were transported to a guarded residence in India.

The Burmese cab of the period was a vehicle drawn by two bullocks, the driver of which goaded them on with a sharp stick. It looked very nice as it passed along, but I found the getting in and out anything but a pleasant process, for it is a very confined affair at best. Many a spruce helmet was crushed in by the entrance and exit, and having to squat on the floor, one very soon realised, after bumping over rough ground, that there were more bones in his body than he had imagined.

By the side of the House of Parliament is the grand entrance to the King's palace, and woe betide the unlucky intruder who had no legitimate business there. His life would almost to a certainty pay the forfeit. Just inside, and in the exact centre of the palace and of the city, and, according to Burmese idea, the world, rises the seven-roofed spire, emblematic of Royalty and Religion, for the Burmese look upon this as the centre of Burmah and therefore of creation. The roof of the entire palace is composed of corrugated iron supported on massive beams painted red and gilded. After proceeding through many tortuous passages we came to the King's and Queen's private audience-room, and then after a time into the private apartments. The private audience-room, the walls of which were composed of pieces of looking-glass, was appropriated by the headquarter Staff, and was soon converted to the prosaic requirements of the officers' mess. I can scarcely recollect how it occurred, but very shortly after my arrival I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Moolla Ismail and his brother, who invited me to take up my residence in their compound, which in a way was a kind of palace. Moolla was reputed to be one of the richest men in Burmah, and was owner of the silk bazaar, which was almost half a mile square. His invitation I eventually accepted, after some demur about troubling him, but he assured me that he would look upon it as a great honour, and therefore I eventually took up my quarters there, being assured later on that on account of my being a European he calculated on me as an extra safety-valve for his house. He provided me with a spacious bedroom,

sitting-room, and billiard-room and dining-room, all furnished in the European style, where he had been accustomed to entertain the wealthy merchants and visitors to the town.

The English troops suffered a great deal from sickness in this hot climate, and the invalids, as well as the wounded, required very careful attention. Hospitals were established in various places, a pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill being speedily converted into sick quarters. The walls were covered with gold, and in the centre stood a beautiful shrine with the figure of the Buddha. Around this, however, under the pressure of circumstances, our sick and wounded were lying, and the floor which was wont to be trodden by the barefooted devotees resounded to the tread of the English soldier and the rattle of his accoutrements. The figure of Buddha is to be met with in all directions throughout Burmah. Nearly on the top of the Mandalay Hills is a gigantic representation of that deity.

It was strange that the white and holy elephant that had special quarters inside the Royal compound should die on the very night the King left. As to whether it did so naturally or by the aid of poison is a question that has never been answered satisfactorily, but there is no doubt that the event had a very great effect in tranquillising the Burmese mind.

News came into the town that a village some little distance outside was being dacoited, so Colonel Hooper, the Provost-Marshal, gathered together a large force of Burmese police, and having invited me to accompany him started off to try and capture the dacoits. On the road we met a Burmese priest, and asked him if he knew the direction of the village we wanted. In innocent amazement he said he did not know. "What! Why, you have just come from the village. Is it being dacoited?" And again and again he replied that he did not know, and faced us with imperturbable stolidity. His senses, however, quickened when he received a sound whack from the open palm of one of our party, and he was then able suddenly to remember that yonder was the place.

On our arrival we surrounded the village and then advanced on it, but most of the robbers had done their ghastly work and had made off, leaving about a dozen for us to try and capture. These men made a bold fight of it, and it came to hand-to-hand fighting between them and our police, who, however,

having cut them down with their swords, succeeded in making prisoners of six.

On searching the houses we discovered evidence of much brutality and torture, for there were wounded people and much blood to be found in all directions.

The Burmese have a silly way of hiding their money in corners of their rooms. The dacoit enters the house, and at the point of the sword endeavours to force the people to own where they have hidden it. In the event of their not finding any one in the room they will stamp with their feet until they hear a hollow sound, then they will dig till they find the treasure they are in search of.

Most of the villagers had succeeded in bolting and hiding themselves on the approach of the thieves, and as there was little chance of our capturing any more dacoits we returned with our prisoners, who were tied by the hands, one to each of the police ponies, and were made to trot alongside them for about six miles right up to the Mandalay prison. Arrived there, and whilst squatting on the ground waiting for certain formalities to be gone through, I noticed that the head of one of the rascals looked very curious, and on close examination I found it was cut clean open and his brain absolutely protruding, and yet this man had run six miles with his head in two! On drawing attention to this horrible sight, a native doctor was called, who, scraping off the brains, simply bound the head together, remarking, "It doesn't much matter, he will be shot to-morrow."

Whenever we captured dacoits red-handed and their guilt was brought home to them upon the evidence customary and necessary according to their own laws, they were punished for their crimes. They were tried, and when it was actually proved that these brigands had committed murder as well as robbery they were sentenced to death. One morning I heard that seven of these unmitigated scoundrels were to pay the penalty of their misdeeds, and were to be shot outside the city walls. As I thought it my duty to make a sketch of this unfortunate episode in the campaign, I repaired to the spot at the appointed time, and it was not long before I saw the seven men, well guarded, coming forward with a file of Indian troops behind them. There was not much ceremony about the matter or much making ready, but three of them were told to

stand up in the corner of the walls, the firing party was ordered in the usual way to "Make ready, present, fire!" and the next moment the three unfortunate bodies were huddled close together on the ground. Then the other four were brought up and stood just in front of their fallen comrades and were blindfolded, but one of these refused to be blindfolded, saying that he was not a bit afraid, for we could not kill him as he had so many talismans against death. Crossing his hands upon his chest he faced the firing party without a quiver, and once more the words rang out, "Ready, present, fire!" and down came this man on the top of those already shot. I went up to examine this man who had not feared death, and found that the bullet had struck the centre of his hands, smashing them, and had then gone right through the body, making an enormous hole in his back. His death must certainly have been instantaneous.

Affairs had become somewhat tranquillised at Mandalay, and General Prendergast deemed it advisable to organise an expedition to the distant Burmese city of Bhamo, which was over four hundred miles further up the River Irrawaddy. The steamers ordinarily used for purposes of commerce and peace by the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company were once more transformed into floating batteries and transport ships and, for the time being, represented the British fleet in Oriental waters.

In accompanying the expedition I sailed on the *Pulu* as the guest of the gallant commander, Captain Woodward, of H.M.S. *Turquoise*. The little steam launch which accompanied the *Pulu* was borrowed from the Indian Survey. We had quite a small fleet of these, and their duty was to go on in advance and take soundings for the passage, for we were advancing into unknown waters, with probable dangers seen and unseen on every hand. So far as navigation was concerned we had no opportunity of taking on board a pilot on whom we could rely, or, in fact, any pilot at all, for the Burmese threatened to, and actually did in many cases, crucify any pilot who assisted the British. The little steamer *Pegu*, under Captain Trench, also of H.M.S. *Turquoise*, was converted in a remarkably short space of time into quite a powerful arsenal. Had there been, however, anything like effective artillery on shore this formidable craft might have been sunk by a single shot, for so heavily laden was she with ordnance and material, of which fuel formed a con-

siderable item, that only six inches of freeboard remained above the surface of the river.

We met any number of boats containing fugitives coming down with the stream, clearly indicating how disturbed the country into which we were penetrating must be. These were filled with natives. The poor people had forsaken their homes and were flying to Mandalay for fear of our friends the dacoits, who had too quickly taken advantage of the reign of anarchy to devastate the country. In many cases we would see two boats fastened together and a huge and coarsely made square sail fastened between them; it was a very primitive kind of naval architecture, but nevertheless the boats, assisted by the strong current, travelled very rapidly.

Later on Colonel Trench captured two boats, the fellows on board of which were found to be armed to the teeth, every one of them. They were brought on board General Prendergast's ship, and Major Adamson, the Political Agent, examined them, actually believing their statements that they were simply villagers armed to resist dacoits. They were allowed to go on their way more or less rejoicing, fortunately not with their arms, for these we appropriated; and lucky it is that we did so, for we heard afterwards that they were members of one of the worst bands of dacoits.

At last we reached Bhamo, which was the navigation limit for steamers on the river. It is some nine hundred miles from the sea, yet the river is three-quarters of a mile broad. The town follows the bank and keeps close to it, and on the land side was a stockade to keep out thieves and tigers. On account of the shallowness of the water near the banks our flotilla had to anchor in mid-stream. As soon as we had done this we could observe that there was some commotion on shore, and presently a large canoe started towards us. On its approach we discovered that the Woon, or provincial governor, was coming along in his state barge. He was squatting in Burmese fashion underneath an enormous gold umbrella, which was held over him, the mark of his rank, and a very useful article indeed in a country where the sun attains the power we experienced at the season of the year in which our expedition was made. General Prendergast received this dignitary on board his steamship, and after the usual salutations had been exchanged the Woon, who was an

exceedingly pleasant and vivacious gentlemen, soon described to the General the position of Bhamo, and gave him all the information he required, even offering to co-operate with him in every possible way. Shortly after the Woon had left us the General and his Staff landed and paid a formal and ceremonious visit in return. As we marched through the town we could not but be surprised or amused at the way in which the common people of Burmah live. Their huts are raised above the ground, and the stockade, a primitive sort of shelter, behind which the Burmese carry on their warlike occupations, was to be seen at its best by the south gate of the city. The English General courteously visited and shook hands in the most friendly manner with the commander of the remnant of the Burmese forces left to Bhamo, the rest of the army, which would be a considerable majority, having perished from malaria, privations, and the deadly variety of diseases which later on played considerable havoc with our own troops.

The General then with his retinue went on to the Public Council Hall. Preparations had evidently been made to receive us, for there was a kind of dais with some chairs on it, and then on either side of it were more chairs ranged. Having been invited to be seated, we had only a short time to wait before the Woon entered the hall, accompanied by several of his Ministers, and he, having taken his seat in the centre, had a somewhat long chat with General Prendergast.

My friend Rose suggested that we should go into one of the Chinese restaurants and try some of their food-stuff. I was dead against it at first, for the crockery and spoons and forks did not appear very inviting, but on entering the house the savoury smell was so very delightful that I made up my mind to risk everything. Like all Englishmen abroad, who consider themselves masters of creation, we walked up to the cooking-stove and carefully examined the contents of the different pots, and pointing with our fingers to what we thought the choicest we intimated that we should like to have some to eat. We then sat at a table, and dish after dish was produced, and I have no hesitation in saying that had those half-dozen dishes been produced at any first-class London hotel they would have done honour to the finest chef the hotel could have produced.

The staple food certainly appeared to be mutton and

chicken, and these with potatoes and herbs were a perfect dream. Whether it was that I was young or hungry I know not, but I do know that I made a mental note that it was one of the most piquant luncheons I ever remember having. Not being accustomed to the use of chopsticks, I had recourse to baby habits and used my fingers.

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General Prendergast having attained his object decided to return to Mandalay. The uncertainty as to the condition in which we might find the country made us advance up the river to Bhamo in something like naval order, our flotilla, such as it was, forming a strict column and being ready for any emergency; but on the return there was no necessity for this, and we travelled each vessel independently—at ease in fact.

Captain Woodward, in charge of the Naval Brigade on the *Pegu*, called at the village of Myadoung and learnt that the Woon of that village had captured some dacoits and had them in prison and in irons, and asked if Captain Woodward would take them down on his steamer to Mandalay. We then paid a visit to the prison and found these ruffians very heavily ironed about the ankles. One of them styled himself a Burmese prince, and showed us his white umbrella, an article which is only allowed to be carried by Royalty in Burmah.

The Woon's request was agreed to, but the difficulty was to get the prisoners down to the shore, for it was found very shortly after they had started walking that the iron anklets around their ankles were cutting into their flesh and that they were actually bleeding. A halt was called so that these irons might be taken off; this was not a very easy thing to do and required a lot of time, as the fetters had to be wedged apart with sticks in a very crude manner.

I made myself very busy on this occasion, for I was determined to have a couple of these iron anklets, which I succeeded in capturing. The man who had declared himself to be the prince turned out to be something of the kind and a pretender to the throne, but for all that he was an arrant vagabond and dacoit.

At last we arrived back at Mandalay without exchanging a shot and without loss of a man on an expedition which had ranged up and down the Irrawaddy some nine hundred miles.

A few mornings after my return I was invited to witness a very interesting ceremony. It appeared that the Kinwoon-Myngee, who had been the principal minister in King Theebaw's time, was to be presented with a letter of thanks by the European residents. It appeared that he had been solely instrumental in saving their lives at the time of the fall of Mandalay; and when we bear in mind that there were a large number of Europeans in Mandalay when the Burmese troops went out to fight, it must strike one as a most astonishing thing that they were not all murdered.

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The next interesting event was the visit of the Viceroy of India—Lord Dufferin—to Mandalay. The King's special apartments were being got ready for him, addresses were being prepared, arches being erected, and Europeans as well as natives were all in a state of excitement about the arrival.

On all these state occasions abroad, as at home, at Mandalay as at Little Pedlington, addresses must be presented, and the European community were very anxious that theirs should be equal to any that would be presented by the Hindoos or Burmese. Being an English artist and a fresh arrival, I was consulted on all sides as to the style of thing to be done, and one or two of the head merchants, accompanied by an English clergyman, called upon me. While chatting over the matter a sudden inspiration seemed to take me, and I suggested that the address should be carried out in the same way as the Burmese write their books and Bible; the idea seemed to take on wonderfully, and they, jumping up, declared it to be an excellent idea. Perhaps it would be as well to describe how the Burmese books are written. In the first place palm-leaves are collected and cut to a certain length and breadth; drawing and writing is then stencilled on them, and a dark oil being rubbed over the leaves permeates into the scratched parts and gives them a dark appearance. My clergyman friend said he knew a very clever young Pongee artist, and he would bring him round to confer with me. I then got him to draw typical Burmese figures and ornaments round the borders of the leaf, and in the centre I stencilled so many words of the address, so that by placing one leaf on the top of the other and putting two pegs

through them at certain distances we obtained a book of about an inch in thickness, on the top and bottom of which I put a wooden cover. One of the difficulties was to obtain an earl's coronet; I quite forgot the proper drawing of one; however, the whole thing when japanned and edged and trimmed up looked remarkably well.

After the presentation had taken place one morning when lunching with Lord Dufferin he remarked, "I feel sure, Mr. Prior, that you had something to do with that address." I had to own up that it was my idea, whereupon he said, "It is the most interesting thing I have ever known in that way," and I felt as pleased as Punch.

At last the all-important morning arrived. The troops lined the streets, the General with his Staff were down on the banks of the river, as also the inevitable guard of honour, and all eyes were strained watching for the steamer flying the Viceroy's flag. It very soon came in sight and shortly after was moored. One of the first to come on shore was Lord William Beresford, who as soon as he spotted me came up with his cheeriest of smiles. "By Jove, I am glad to see you!" In the same breath he asked me if I knew Lord Dufferin, and saying, "I will introduce you," marched me down to where the Viceroy stood, speaking the usual formula of introduction. But Lord Dufferin, turning round with one of his magical smiles, said, "Oh, there is no occasion for an introduction, for I know Mr. Prior very well," and then linking his arm in mine he walked me up and down, to the astonishment of all around, asking me all sorts of kindly questions.

Then making a move to the reception-hall, where the address was to be presented, the Viceroy sat in the chair of state, with Lady Dufferin on his left and his retinue on either side; the Burmese ministers sat on chairs and, I believe, for the first time in their lives, for they certainly looked very uncomfortable in them, and I even heard it said openly by those around that it was an insult to the English that the Burmese should be allowed to sit on chairs at all, considering that their natural habit was to squat. As a matter of fact I personally saw two of these ministers squatting on chairs like tailors. Here it was that the address of the European community was presented. Immediately after this his Excellency in his state carriage started for the city of Mandalay, halting on the way at an

arch that had been erected by Moollah Ismail, and where an address, this time from the Surrattee community, was presented. It had been written in English, but as Moollah could not read that simple language he asked me to do so, and as I blundered through it to the best of my ability I could see a merry twinkle in Lady Dufferin's eyes.

On the left of the arch were some Burmese dancing women, who seemed to interest Lord Dufferin a good deal more than the reading of the address. They were engaged in a strange set of movements, better described as fantastic writhings of lissom bodies without an honest hop, skip, or jump in the whole performance.

Arrived at the Palace of Mandalay, Lord Dufferin proceeded at once to the state apartments which had been prepared for him. In King Theebaw's time this was the private audience chamber and was a mass of gold and looking-glass.

Meeting Lord Beresford one day I asked him to come and dine with me, assuring him that I had the best curry maker in Mandalay, who I knew would act as a magnet. When I informed Moollah that the Viceroy's military secretary was coming to dinner he appeared in the height of delight and gave orders that the dining-room should be specially ornamented with his best silver and flowers. I invited Mr. Villiers and Rose and one or two other men to join in, and we all did full justice to my cook's supreme efforts. When the curry turned up Lord William owned that it was very good, "but not hot enough, Prior; I like a hot curry."

"I'm very sorry," I said, "but if you come and dine with me again I will try and give you one."

"All right, I will."

On the second occasion I gave my cook special orders. "I want a hot curry, you understand."

"Yes, sir."

"Now mind it's hot."

Sure enough it must have been so, for the very smell of it was enough, and I was rather interested watching Lord William attack it. He had two or three mouthfuls, and then turning to me he said, "Yes, Prior, this is a hot curry—in fact, damned hot!" and even the fire-eating Lord William had to give it up as a bad job. I could not complain, for my servant had carried out his instructions.

The Burmese are a merry, lazy people, sociable, good-humoured, bright, energetic and, when they like, temperate. Contented with the British rule as the Burmese are, it would be our fault if we did not influence those very attractive folk for our common good.

CHAPTER XI

THE JAMESON RAID. 1895

ONE day, walking down St. Swithin's Lane out of Cannon Street, I met a friend of mine, Mr. William Morrison, who invited me to turn into the City Carlton Club and have a whisky-and-soda. During the conversation he said he was just going over to see Mr. Barney Barnato, and would be very pleased to introduce me to him. We proceeded to his office, where we found the millionaire as busy as possible with his nephews Wolff and Jack Joel. He was in his shirt-sleeves, I remember.

Whilst chatting with Mr. Morrison he suddenly turned to me and said, "You know South Africa very well, do you not? I wonder if you would like to go out there again and go to Johannesburg and make sketches of the wonderful gold-mines now at work? You ask Mr. Ingram if he will let you go, and I will make it worth your while and pay all expenses." He brought down maps and showed me the line of the reef where the gold was, and also suggested that I should visit the Kimberley mines. Repairing to my office, I found Mr. Ingram much more ready to let me go out than I should have imagined.

"Yes, Prior, you go;" and then, looking at me quite seriously he added, "and send us any sketches of scenes and of events that may be taking place when you get there." At that time I thought nothing of this, but in after years I have often wondered if he did not know something of the so-called "Jameson Raid." Weeks after I heard it said that the great Cecil Rhodes and Mr. Chamberlain knew more than they openly acknowledged, and I wondered whether Mr. Ingram, as a Member of Parliament, had heard a smattering of what was likely to take place.

Arriving in Cape Town, one of the first things I did was to call on Mr. Cecil Rhodes at his office in Adderley Street. I found him very charming, a man who impressed me very much. He evidently thought hard, and was up to the smallest details of what he talked about. His eye alone told you how smart and clever he was. Altogether he looked and was a remarkable man, and his house, Groote Schuur, at Rondebosch, was simply charming. He seemed to have a particular predilection for candles, for when I dined with him I found an enormous number burning everywhere. In the hall there was a chandelier with about fifty of them, and in the library, smoking-room, dining-room, passages, and all over the place nothing but candles.

My next visit was to the President of the Government Railways, who gave me a pass for myself and servant throughout the whole service of railways in South Africa. The journey from Cape Town to Johannesburg usually takes between four and five days, but on a Thursday there is a special mail train, with a dining-car attached, that does it in three nights and two days, and I am bound to own that in those days I had never travelled more comfortably or with as good food, service, and attention as on that train. My travelling companion was a Mr. Clarence, a man I had known for years in the Union Steamship Company's service, and we had a reserved compartment.

Before starting I had telegraphed to Mr. Solly Joel, another nephew of Mr. Barnato's, to be kind enough to take rooms for me. He, finding the best hotel full, had taken rooms in a fourth-rate one. Luckily Mr. Clarence had taken two rooms, one of which he gave to me, at Heath's Hotel. The charge of £1 a day does not sound very heavy, but the etceteras were pretty stiff. Brandy-and-soda, 2s. 6d.; a pint of common claret, 5s. 6d., or a bottle, 10s. 6d.; champagne, from 25s. to 30s. I made up my mind to live on whisky-and-soda, but soda was 1s. a bottle, and Apollinaris, 1s. 6d.

A Mr. Calvert came to meet me on behalf of Mr. Joel, and I asked him to have a brandy-and-Apollinaris with Mr. Clarence, and I found these three drinks were just 7s. 6d. These prices were all right for those who lived there and who were paid in proportion, but for the unfortunate traveller they were rather heavy.

Johannesburg to me was certainly a very interesting place, for only about eight years before it was an open veldt with one house on it, and curiously enough I slept in that very house only a few years before (I think it was in 1891), in company with Mr. H. B. Marshall, who was then a poor man, but at this time is a millionaire. Had we only known of the riches of that forty miles' reef of gold vein we could have bought the farms covering it for about five thousand pounds at the most. They have since realised hundreds of millions.

I found the people generally the most hospitable I had ever met. The town was a wonder, and the longer I remained there the more was I astonished. It had grown in eight years from a plain, to a town with suburbs, and delightfully pretty houses.

The ladies of the town had all their dresses from Paris, and the best of the men dressed in the latest style. Then with regard to carriages one was simply surprised. Every one must have his conveyance, cape- or dog-carts, victorias or landaus, phaetons, and even coaches, all of them horsed splendidly.

Most particularly I was struck by the prices.

Being a cigarette smoker I came off rather badly, for I had to pay eighteen shillings a hundred. My brown shoes required repairs, for which I was charged fifteen shillings. In fact, at last I became frightened to open my mouth, because it seemed it would cost me about five shillings to do so. It was just as well that gold was being fetched up at the different mines to pay these expenses, but, as I said before, it was the traveller who suffered.

Water was very scarce in Johannesburg, and the rain, which had been long looked forward to, would not come, and at the hotels they refused to give you a bath, and many rich people used soda-water. One man, to my knowledge, at his hotel ordered twelve large bottles of Apollinaris, and turned these into his bath, which cost him thirty-six shillings! When it did rain it seemed to come down in one sheet of water, and the streets were turned into rivers or rushing torrents; but it dried so quickly that the next day if there was any wind it would turn into a perfect dust-storm, which is really awful, for it drives into the room, smothers everything, and gets into the food. As there was no drainage in the town, the rest is better left to the imagination.

While talking of Johannesburg, I may as well say that the elevation was too much for me. It is over six thousand feet above sea-level, and I found my breathing and my heart gave me great trouble at times. I was told by doctors that every one suffers when they first arrive, but that the unpleasantness would soon pass away.

I had not been in Johannesburg long before I could see there was a strong feeling between the Boers and the English.

For months the capitalists deliberated, and for months they secretly obtained arms; how, it is not necessary for me to say; whether in packing cases, labelled as other goods and passed through the Customs slyly, or whether received in iron tubes as machinery for the mines, it does not matter. The fact remains that on December 28th an enormous number of rifles, as well as machine guns were stowed away in private houses and offices. The men had formed themselves into a band called the National Union of Reformers, and they had sent a telegram to Dr. Jameson, who was at Mafeking in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, imploring him to come to their assistance as the Boers were about to attack them.

I could easily see that a row of some kind was inevitable. I am afraid that I soon became imbued with the prevalent feeling, for I was invited to the Caledonian banquet where very fiery speeches were made. The Committee had been very careful to try and keep out any Boers or Dutch representatives, but evidently one or two managed to get in, for I found the next day some strong remarks were made about the speeches. I had been invited to make one, and as I talked I seemed to warm to the subject, and at last, in a weak and stupid moment, openly declared that I could see something serious was brewing, and that if the people of the town did fix bayonets I would follow them. This nearly got me into trouble, but I was let off by the Boer Government saying that the remarks were only made by a drunken man. I did not mind that—it saved me from arrest!

On December 30th I met Mr. George Farrar at his office, where I saw his cape-cart being filled up with rifles and ammunition, and then we drove to his house to dinner, where most of the leaders of the revolution were to be. It was like a General and his Staff talking over the field of action, and

when I said "Good-night" on leaving, his final remark was, "Look out, Prior, at twelve o'clock to-morrow for events." Sure enough the next day, when I was outside the Corporation buildings, I saw some one making a speech out of a window to the crowd underneath, and suddenly there seemed to be a rush in all directions. It was then announced that Dr. Jameson and his body of eight hundred men were on their way to Johannesburg, and that we were to go out and help him in. Carts and wagons were wanted for provisions as well as to turn into ambulances. I was much amused to see how, as a coal lorry came up the street, men with rifles already slung over their shoulders and with cartridge belts round their waists made a dash for it, flung the sacks in all directions, and drove off in the wagon to load up with provisions. This kind of thing went on in all parts of the town.

Going into the building, I found out, after some trouble, that the news was actually true, and that Jameson was absolutely expected very shortly. I had a great friend there, Herbert Stroyan, and I invited him to accompany me; then got hold of a cape-cart and drove out as far as we possibly could to await the arrival of Jameson and his little band. But we found instead of his coming in that the news we had received was all false. Jameson had come; had been opposed by the Boers; had lost the fight, and he and his followers were being marched as prisoners to Pretoria, with the exception of a number of killed and wounded.

I said so then, and I have never seen any reason for altering my mind, that Jameson was betrayed. His guides, who could have led him through a valley straight up to the doors of Johannesburg, led him into a perfect hornet's nest, a position which five times the number of men would not have been able to get through, and the battle of Doornkop, instead of being a success became a disaster.

Finding that I could not get any further that day, I was perforce obliged to return, but the next morning I went out again, and was on the very ground where the fight took place. Then it was easy to see how it was that the Boers had been successful and Jameson had had such a smash up. He and his men were on a rising ground, while the Boers were hidden behind rocks and walls on three sides of him. This gave me plenty of

sketching to do, and for forty-eight hours I never went to sleep, I was so anxious to get my sketches away. There is no doubt that it was a miserably conducted revolution, and at times I feel the ringleaders ought to have been shot or hanged for muddling it so. It was a poor action, surely, to ask Jameson to come right through the heart of the Transvaal to Johannesburg and then, when he was within a few miles of the place to leave him and his men to their fate.

In one of my home letters I read: "I hope you have not been afraid of all the nonsense you have read about this town being in flames, and the Boers murdering the lot of us." As a matter of fact, we deserved to be much worse treated by them than we were; the town might have been bombarded, and a most awful amount of bloodshed would have taken place in any other country. The Boers treated us very well indeed.

At the commencement a committee was formed with the title of "Reform Committee," and men were enrolled by the dozen—I believe there were about sixty. Mr. Solly Joel came to me and said, "What do you think, Prior, ought I to join it or not?" "All your friends of finance, and all the richest men have joined the Committee," I said, "and if you do not, when it is all over you will be left in the cold." He then determined to join it. When it *was* all over, and he found himself in prison, he was not so ready with his thanks!

As soon as the Boers had got hold of Jameson and his men, the next thing was to arrest the Reform Committee, the leaders of the revolution in Johannesburg. There was an exceedingly nice Lieutenant of Police, an awfully good fellow, and he went round to the different members and informed them that he had received instructions to arrest them and to take them to Pretoria, and that he would give them time to collect a few articles of clothing if they would give their word not to attempt to leave the town; and there was no single instance of a broken word of honour. I was at the Club when he turned up and arrested a dozen, and at the same time had a drink with them. He then told me that at one time he had received instructions to arrest me, but later on the order was cancelled. And so the millionaires who had organised

the revolution and had blundered over it, were one and all taken by rail to the jail in Pretoria.

In another of my letters home I say: "President Kruger and General Joubert—in fact, all in authority—have been exceptionally kind to me. I was bent on going to Pretoria to see and sketch the Reform Committee in prison, and I persisted and worried the heads of the Government until I obtained permission to do so. I was informed that I should have a pass to go into the jail and see any one I wished, but that I should only be allowed to stop ten minutes, the same as any other visitor. But I pointed out that I could not possibly sketch in that time, and I wanted to show the world at large how well the prisoners were being treated. I was informed in reply that I should not be allowed to remain longer, or even to sketch, as the head jailer was very strict, and, moreover, disliked the English. 'Very well,' I said to the State Attorney, Mr. Coster, who was the Minister of Prisons, 'then I shall have to invent my sketches, and if they are not complimentary it will not be my fault, as I can only imagine you refuse to let me see the jail all over because you are treating the prisoners very badly.' This naturally made him very cross. He said it was not true, and got into quite a rage. 'Very well,' I said, 'the correspondent of the *Times*, Colonel Younghusband, is here, and would like to go with me and see how the prisoners are being treated. Grant us, therefore, a pass, that we may see for ourselves.' He seemed to mellow down a little, and said, 'If you will come to-morrow morning at nine o'clock I will see what can be done.' This sounded better, and the next morning we found the pass ready for us and a special letter written to the jailer. This head jailer was a brother-in-law of President Kruger, and with a growl rather than a smile he handed us over to one of his jailers, with a remark which, of course, we did not understand. It turned out that we were treated very much the same as ordinary visitors, for we were marched quickly through and round a big square, and then ushered out. This did not satisfy me at all, so the next day I adopted other methods. We once more turned up at the jail with another letter from General Joubert, and at a little house by the side of the jail I saw a stout, I might say a fat, woman, who, I had been informed, was the jailer's wife, lolling in an easy chair, playing with two dirty little urchins by

her side. Going up to them, I patted one on the cheek, and, remembering once more Archibald Forbes's little tricks, I produced a sovereign and gave it to one of the children to play with; then I produced another, which I gave to the other child, and the face of the stout party can be more easily imagined than described. Her smile was fearful to behold, but evidently my little ruse had succeeded, for the jailer, coming in shortly afterwards, was told in the Boer language what I had done, and then he looked at me as I once more produced my letter of introduction. He read it, and treated me to a kind of growling smile, and, going to a wicket which led into the prison yard, he said something to his chief inspector, who opened a small door and let Younghusband and myself through. This man in turn handed us over to a coloured jailer, with evidently much more pleasing instructions than the day before. As soon as we entered the large courtyard I heard some one shout out, 'Why, there's Prior! Come and have a drink, old man!' Going over to the left, we saw about twenty of the Reform prisoners sitting, lolling, and lying under an awning outside their cells. I went over to them, the jailer not attempting to object, and after being welcomed right heartily I was shown the cells in which eight of the prisoners had to sleep, and each measured 12 feet by 12 feet. I knew nearly every one of them, for they were all members of the Rand Club. I must own that, barring the bad sleeping quarters and the fact that they were in prison, they were jolly comfortable. . . . 'Have a whisky-and-soda, Prior?' and, by Jove, it was soon brought, with a large lump of ice in it! And this was prison! Our jailer then showed us a small cell in which a lot of Boer prisoners were locked up and were awaiting trial for deeds too ghastly to mention. Then he took us to the other prisoners—murderers awaiting to be hanged, and other men who had committed crimes and offences from the smallest degree to the very greatest. There were Indians, Chinese, Afrikanders, and Englishmen, poor devils! We then went over to the other side of the courtyard, where we were equally well received by the remainder of the Reformers. Each section of the prisoners was forbidden to mix with another, and chalk lines were drawn on the ground, and warders appointed to see that they did not pass over them. I saw an old native chief, Molobock, who had been captured

by the Boers, and was imprisoned for life, walking about just as he pleased. After bidding them goodbye we proceeded to the yard where the four leaders of the revolution were incarcerated. They were kept quite separate from the others. They were Lionel Phillips, Colonel Rhodes, George Farrar, and John Hayes Hammond—all millionaires. Colonel Rhodes immediately called out, 'Here's Prior, by Jove! He is the beggar who says we ought all to be shot!' 'Quite true,' I replied with a smile; 'and so you ought, for having conducted a revolution so jolly badly!' 'Have a drink, old man,' they said; and when I said I had had one a short time ago they said, 'Oh! hang it, have another! You don't get a chance of having a drink with prisoners in jail very often!' Then they brought forth pine apples, grapes, and all sorts of luxuries, and I saw several cases of champagne in the corner; in fact, they had every luxury that money could buy. The jailer had said several times that it was time for us to leave, but on each occasion a sovereign had been put into his hand and a cigar was given him, which he smoked with delight. I should think in the twenty minutes I was there he must have received at least four pounds. This, added to the one I gave him at the start, must have done him very well for the day. . . . Some of the prisoners were playing poker, with matches as counters, representing two shillings, and they kept score by marking on the walls. A little farther on a game of marbles was going on, in which quite old boys joined. At last the warders led the way to a door which, after being unlocked, opened into a small courtyard. The warders then pointed to a door in the corner, and on crossing over and looking in I saw poor Dr. Jameson, all by himself, in a tiny cell, reclining on a trestle bed, without comforts of any kind, with the exception of cigarettes and matches. In the corner was an old wine box on which was a tin washing bowl, and a tin jug was on the ground. There was also a bottle with a candle stuck in it. Over the bed a line was stretched, on which some of Jameson's underclothes, which he had washed out, hung to dry. I was only allowed to stand on the threshold, with a warder on either side of me. In an undertone I said, 'Excuse me, Dr. Jameson, making a sketch of you, but I am doing it out of duty to my office.' But he, recognising me, said very kindly, 'That is all right, Prior; everybody knows you and

your work.' I said, 'I am awfully sorry'; then the warders looked at me, and I realised I was not to speak, for I had given my word that I would hold no conversation with the prisoner. Just as I had finished making a few hasty notes of the cell a terrific rainstorm burst—I think one of the worst I have ever seen in Africa—and as we were in the open I was hurried away to take shelter. Standing there, I asked one of the warders if he would allow me to sketch him, which I did. He, understanding English, told me I had been very good and had kept my word; because, although I was a friend of the prisoner's, I had not said anything I should not have said. I was glad to hear him say this, for I had been longing to speak more with Dr. Jameson."

I found that I had not made nearly enough sketches in the short time which had been allowed me, and therefore I determined on another call. On this occasion Colonel Younghusband again accompanied me, and we obtained permission for one more special visit. The Reform Committee in the big yard were pleased to see us again, especially Younghusband, as they thought that through the columns of his important journal he might be able to assist them out of their present troubles. The jailers, remembering the colour of English gold, were only too pleased to give us what facilities they could, and we were thus enabled not only to have long conversations with our friends, but to partake plentifully of their hospitality. Fancy talking of hospitality in prison!

The next move, and to us one of the most important, was a visit to Dr. Jameson's officers, and the jailer led the way to a little courtyard enclosed within high walls, and seated on the ground against one of the walls we saw Dr. Jameson (who had been transferred from his stifling cell to more open quarters), Colonel Sir John Willoughby, Major the Hon. Frederick White, and Major John B. Stracey. They jumped up and received us most kindly, saying they were soon going to have tea—would we join them? and at the same time a jailer with a tray of tea-things entered the courtyard. There were no restrictions placed on our conversation on this occasion, so while I was sketching Younghusband was able to pump to his heart's content. One of their greatest privations was the want of a bath—Boers not being noted for their affection for water—but it so happened that there was a small

stream of water running through this courtyard, which these men dammed up in such a clever manner that it formed a bath for them, and then they let it out, and the next day had a fresh lot.

The jailer in attendance was one of the best, and allowed us to remain much longer than we ought to have done. It is scarcely necessary to say that we paid another visit to the leaders of the Reform Committee, as well as to the other men, and altogether we spent about three hours in the prison.

Certainly the Government were treating the prisoners with every leniency, and allowed them almost any luxury which they cared to pay for.

On the following day I obtained permission from General Joubert, who remembered me well from the days of Majuba and the time I slept at the top of Laing's Nek, to go and see Dr. Jameson's fighting-men, who were detained in the Grand Stand on the Racecourse, under a strong guard, and I spent nearly two hours chatting with them over the battle while I was making sketches. The chief jailer came to parade them, which he did twice a day, and counted them to see that none had escaped.

Arriving at Pretoria was one thing, but to return to Johannesburg was another, and we had to obtain a permit to do so, and at the station we were subjected to a most rigorous search, although the officer said he knew me well enough, but his orders were to search every one minutely.

I think I have mentioned before that I was asked twice to go on the Reform Committee, but I persisted that I had so much work to do that I could not have attended the meetings. Had I been stupid enough to have been led away by the vanity of the position, I should have been enjoying myself with the others in Pretoria Jail.

Previous to the arrest of the Reform Committee Mr. Barney Barnato arrived in Johannesburg, accompanied by his wife and daughter and a parrot. The latter he had had for years, and he always took it with him wherever he went. I believe he looked upon it as a kind of fetish. Mr. Solly Joel and I went to the station to meet them at 3.30 in the morning.

Of course the prisoners had to stand their trial, and the Attorney-General, who was distinctly anti-English, had his hands full.

In my notes I say: "During the so-called revolution in Johannesburg it certainly was very exciting, and from hour to hour no one knew what was going to happen. Now that the leaders and the members of the Reform Committee are in Pretoria awaiting trial, I cannot help thinking that the worst cause for anxiety is even now coming on, and that before long we shall have some awful scenes in the Transvaal. I dare not say what I think will happen, but there are only two courses open: either peace at any price—that is to say, that the Boer Government are to give way on all sides—or there will be some awful bloodshed, for to go on as people are doing now is an impossibility. Only last night in the public streets I was spoken to and insulted by a zarp. I have not experienced this before, which clearly shows how cheeky they are since the arrests, and the tension is so great that I am hourly expecting a big row in the streets, for there are men determined to stop the insults from which they are now suffering. The situation appears much more serious than it has ever been, but it rests with the Boer leaders to stop it or to take the consequences. I tried to send a telegram to my office, and was actually not allowed to. I could not trust my sketches to the post, but had to get them down to Cape Town secretly. There are a hundred opinions as to what the prisoners' punishments will be, but the general opinion is that they will be very slight, or there is no saying what the consequence will be. We are all living on the top of a volcano."

"I returned to Pretoria last night, where I have been sketching the preliminary examination of the Reform Committee, which was held in the Raadzaal. President Kruger's and General Joubert's friendliness to me was of great use, and an introduction to the Attorney-General, as also to the Landdrost, who is acting as judge, obtained me the privilege of a seat on the bench, and I was allowed to sit there for several days while the examination was going on. One of the papers, the following morning, said I kept bobbing my head up and down like a bird drinking water. Later on, about thirty of the prisoners obtained permission to go down to Johannesburg from the Saturday to Monday!"

CHAPTER XII

BULUWAYO. 1896

WHILE working up my sketches of the different mines round Johannesburg I received a telegram from my office instructing me to proceed at once to Buluwayo.

It did not take me long to make arrangements, and at the club I learned that the best and most direct route was by rail to Mafeking, which usually took three and a half days, and thence by mail coach, a rather tedious and trying journey of over six hundred miles, which usually took about six days.

On arrival at Mafeking Station two or three native boys seized my luggage, and off we started for the Sarak Hotel. Unfortunately every room was occupied, but after a lot of persuasion the proprietress said she would arrange for me somehow, and telling me to follow her I soon found myself in a loft with a canvas roof and walls, directly over an onion store-room.

I had received a letter of introduction to Mr. Julius Weil, the great contractor, one of those who would contract to supply anything—from tin tacks to hundreds of wagons and thousands of oxen—on the shortest notice. He had the best stores all along the road and in the principal towns in the district. Calling on him after breakfast, he exclaimed, on seeing me, "How are you, Mr. Prior? Do you remember me in the Zulu War and our return voyage to England in the same ship? Can I do anything for you?" "Well," I said, "I want to go up to Buluwayo, and I want a seat in the next coach and all the information you can give me." "Come to lunch at my house at one o'clock," said he heartily. "I run the mail coaches, and shall be most pleased to do all I can for you." During an excellent lunch a telephone message

came from the office to the effect (as good luck would have it) that the best seat in the coach had just been given up, and that the seat would be reserved for me. Mr. Weil also fixed me up with a box of provisions and whisky for the road, as he said we should only occasionally come across a place where we could obtain food.

The coach started at 5 p.m., and, after a most feeble attempt of the driver to blow the horn, and many yells and much cracking of whips, the ten mules, two abreast, started pulling the cumbersome coach with its ten passengers inside. These coaches are exactly like the celebrated ones in the Wild West of America, one of which Colonel Cody used in his Cowboys' Show at the Earl's Court Exhibition.

Shortly after leaving Gaberones we found that the ravages of the plague (known as rinderpest) were terrible, and the orders given by the High Commissioner of Police were to shoot all those animals that were affected. These were lying in close proximity to the road, with others that had died naturally from the plague, and the stench, right up to Buluwayo, was at times almost unbearable. In many cases the animals were actually found in the middle of the road, where the coach had to take to the veldt and circuit round them. This was one of the principal dangers of the night travelling. We came upon this sort of thing time after time all the way up—there were thousands of dead and dying oxen; and although half a crown and three-and-sixpence a head were offered to the natives to bury the animals, they could not cope with the gigantic numbers. More significant even than this were the hundreds of wagons, laden with valuable merchandise, standing idle on either side of the road, the owners and transport riders not knowing what to do in this awful dilemma. They could not obtain fresh oxen, and the few mules on the road were all wanted for the mails, and yet they could not leave their valuable cargoes on the veldt at the mercy of the natives. On April 6th, at 11 p.m., we arrived at Machudi, where we stopped an hour for supper. A native runner who had previously arrived stated that the mail coach would not be able to proceed further than Tuli, as the Matabele had murdered all the Bechuanaland police at Macloutsie. Most unpleasant news, for none of us were over-anxious to make the acquaintance of a Matabele impi.

We had left Machudi and had been travelling for about an hour in pitch darkness (the driver simply depending on the leading mules to keep to the road), when we heard a sudden row outside. The front part of the coach seemed to lurch forward, and the next moment we went over with a bang, and the passengers were huddled together one on top of the other. I was somewhere about the middle, and the top man was trying to walk over me, while I was smothering those below me. When we had sorted ourselves out, so to speak, we found the coach on the edge of a dry river and the mail-bags at the bottom of it.

All hands to the rescue ; and after many futile attempts the coach was at last righted, the mails repacked, and we were continuing our journey again. Very slowly, however, for the driver had so much difficulty in seeing the road ahead of his ten mules. The name " driver " seems to me a misnomer ; not that I can think of a better name to express the position he holds. The handling of the numerous and heavy reins is done by a strong native, whereas the manipulation of the long whip is performed by the so-called " driver," who is generally a white man or a half-caste, and so dexterous is he in its use, that for a wager he will kill a fly on one of the mules without hurting the animal.

We travelled all night as well as day, sitting and lying up against each other's shoulders the best way we could. I managed to sleep sitting bolt upright. One became wearied with the travelling and the interminable monotony of the scenery—mimosa bush, and black- and white-thorn. At night, unfortunately, we were not allowed to have a light inside the coach, because the driver said it interfered with his seeing the road. We were several times in a sorry plight for water, and we still passed numbers of wagons, with loads of provisions and ammunition, which could not get forward for want of animals to draw them. Our mules were dreadfully done up ; they had been so worked lately with ammunition and guns going to the front.

Sitting in a coach day and night for a week is rather wearisome, and for comfort I had exchanged my boots for a pair of slippers, and the draught under the door must have attacked my ankles, for they gradually began to swell, and at last became such a size and caused me such intense pain

that I could not stand. Luckily for me, on the eighth day we arrived at Palapye, the capital of Khama's country, and the doctor who was in the coach insisted that I could not possibly continue in the state I was in, but must stop there and lay up for a day or two. He kindly bandaged up my feet before leaving for his station.

Khama, the great chief, hearing that I was ill and a stranger, came over to see me, and I had quite long chats with him, through an interpreter, a Mr. Maolaren. I told him how glad I was to find him wearing English clothes and Waukenphast boots, and he smiled as he replied that he was very fond of English people and English clothes, for he had had such a happy time on his visit to England, and he showed me a gold-head Malacca cane which I think he said had been given to him by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

Having recovered the use of my legs, and while lamenting my compulsory delay, a telegram was received announcing that another stage-coach was coming up, and I was informed that I should be able to go forward with it.

About twelve o'clock at night, the mules having been changed, the wheels greased, and the drivers refreshed, the new coach started on what proved to be a most exciting drive. I had made myself quite comfortable amongst the mail-bags at the top of the coach, and we had been travelling at a rattling good pace for some time, when the leading mules, shying at some dead oxen, hauled the carriage off the road into a spruit, and over it went with a smash; the mails and goods sent sprawling all over the road, and I was landed on to some soft sand. With the superhuman efforts of some friendly natives, the driver, and ourselves, the coach was propped up a little, but to very little purpose. Then a brilliant idea occurred to the driver. He unhitched four mules, and a chain having been passed completely round the coach, they were made to pull at right angles until it was nearly upright; then the other six mules were made to pull in a front direction, and with all of them hauling together we were eventually pulled out of the spruit. The mules having then been replaced, we jumped in and continued on the road. We had not gone four miles before we once more went into an awful place by the side of the road. I was asleep amongst the mails, and as we went over I was pitched this time right on to a clump of bushes, and

I was made painfully aware of the difference between a feather-bed and a thorn bush. Once more the mules had to be unhitched, and we resorted to the same measures as before for putting the coach on its legs again.

At the last station before we arrived at Buluwayo we found those in charge had made it into a very strongly fortified post, with a laager splendidly arranged, for they were expecting the enemy any moment. We were told that to proceed alone, as we were intending, was ridiculous and courted disaster. Being, however, most anxious to go on, the idea occurred to me to telegraph to Colonel Napier in Buluwayo asking him if he could possibly send some of his brave fellows out to meet our coach. This he most readily promised to do. When about seven miles from Buluwayo we met twenty-five of his troops, who escorted us in; and lucky indeed we were, for we heard the next day that an impi of the enemy had crossed the road and that our coach was the last that would get through. Altogether it took me just seventeen days to get from Johannesburg to Buluwayo.

It was not surprising that we found the people in a state of excitement, particularly as a big impi of Matabele was reported within four miles to the north of the town. On getting down from the coach I was met by Baron Hirschler, who introduced himself to me and said that a Mr. Sadler, Commissary-General, and Lieutenant the Honourable Maurice Gifford desired that I should go and stay at their house, and they would do all they could to make me comfortable. Lieutenant Gifford was the brother of Lord Gifford who gained a V.C. in the Ashanti Campaign of 1873, and it was his particular wish that I should occupy his room, as unfortunately he was in hospital.

Shortly after this it was declared to be too unsafe for us to sleep so far away, as there were no vedettes or pickets between us and the enemy. Every one else was in laager, so we had to change our quarters. The laager, which was splendidly arranged, was constructed in the enormous market square, in the centre of which was the Town Hall, where most of the women and children were accommodated. Then outside the building all round was a line of wagons, then a passage, then a double row of wagons, the outside ones having sand-bags under and inside them so as to form a rampart to

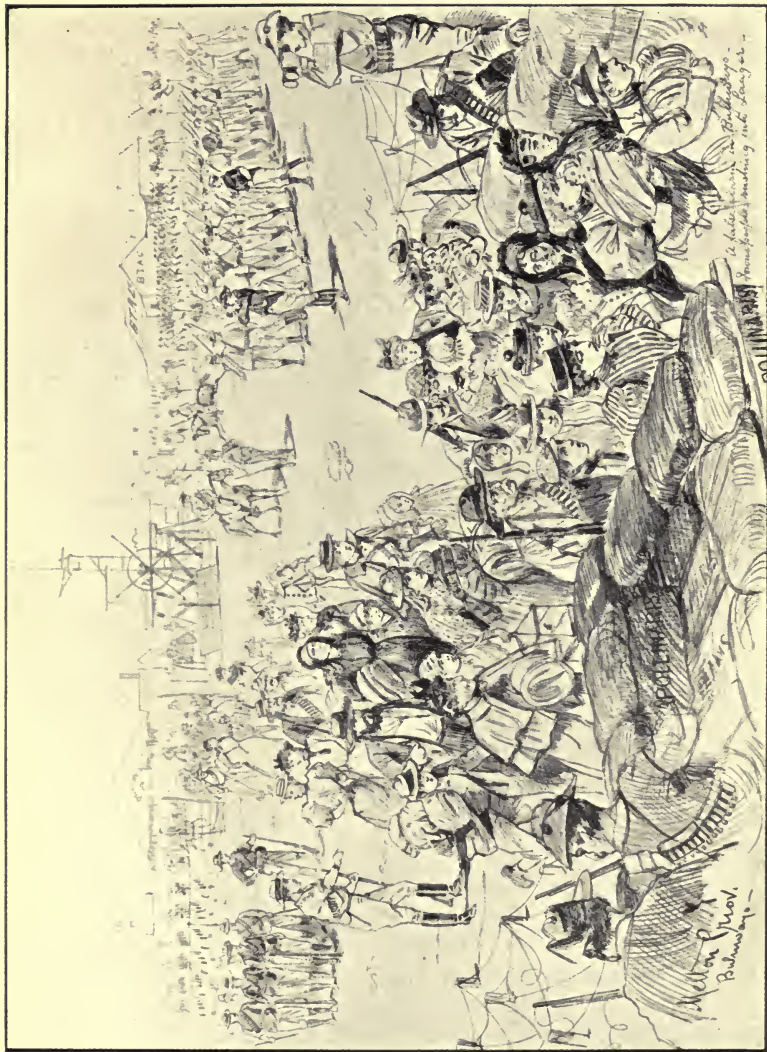
protect the men when fighting. Outside this were wire entanglements, and then a big open space, beyond which was a barbed-wire fencing. It would have been impossible for any number of Matabele to rush the place.

Two wagons belonging to Hirschler and Sadler had already been placed in position opposite the guard-room and officers' mess, one of which I was asked to consider my home. I found this arrangement most convenient, for I had been elected a member of the mess and could go in and out as I liked, and this enabled me to hear all the latest news of the camp.

There were no Imperial troops in the town; officers and troopers consisted solely of volunteers, storekeepers, miners, farmers, and so on. Colonel Napier, who commanded the column when it went out, was the colonel of a local volunteer corps and a master butcher. In the town there were some very fine and experienced fellows, among them being Mr. F. C. Selous, the big-game hunter, Colonel Jack Spreckley, Colonel Digby Willoughby, the Hon. Maurice Gifford, Colonel Brander, Captain Howard Brown, Captain Lambert, Fred and P. D. Crew, and Dr. Vine. All those who had work in the town attended to it, as far as they could, in the daytime, and it was arranged that warnings should be given by bugles being sounded in different parts of the town in the event of the enemy advancing or threatening a rush.

The evening following my sleeping in the laager I was chatting outside the little club-house when I heard gong after gong being beaten most furiously, and after a few moments six or seven hundred odd men, women, and children were to be seen rushing from all directions down to the laager, while the volunteers were falling into position preparatory to going out in support of one of our outlying posts, which the Matabele were trying to capture. The enemy must have had a nasty time of it, for they retired leaving a number of dead as well as wounded behind them.

It was quite exciting at times, for the enemy came so near at one time to the town that they set fire to some outlying houses. In these little engagements acts of heroism were constantly taking place which in the English army would have meant a V.C., but of course things were different in this case. The fine fellows were fighting for their country and families,



A FALSE ALARM IN BULUWAYO—TOWNSPEOPLE RUSHING INTO LAAGER.

many of them having lost their houses, cattle, and many their relatives, so it is easily imagined how mad they were and that they fought like devils. The men who were doing the fighting were certainly the finest specimens I had ever seen, manly and plucky, and held the Matabele in supreme contempt. They were dead shots at eight hundred yards, and I have even seen them charge the niggers with revolvers.

At last a serious expedition, that which would be called a "reconnaissance in force," was to be made, the objects being to go out and meet Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who was on his way with a fighting column from Salisbury, at the Shangani River, and to get at the enemy and rout him if possible. Colonel Napier was to be in command, and on the Staff were Colonel Jack Spreckley, Howard Brown, Arthur Rhodes (brother of Cecil Rhodes), Mr. F. C. Selous, the distinguished South African sportsman and explorer, whose special acquaintance with the country and its people was unequalled, and Dr. Vine. I had a pony, but no means of carrying luggage, so I asked Colonel Napier if he would allow me to take a tin box, with my papers, sketch-books, clothes, &c. It could easily be put on one of his commissariat wagons and would not be very heavy. He replied that everybody was going very light and with only the clothes they stood up in, and the rest they would carry in their saddlebags, but as a special favour he would allow me to take my box and would give instructions about it. So at night I got two men to carry it down to the market square and put it on one of the transport wagons, ready for the start in the morning. They said it was a good weight, which did not surprise me.

On the following day, after we had been on the march for some time, I was riding by the side of and chatting with Colonel Napier, when it occurred to me to ask him to have a little whisky, and I offered him my silver flask. This he readily accepted, as did Captain Brown and Arthur Rhodes, and between the three they emptied it. Again at night I offered the same flask, full, of course, and this also they soon emptied. I did the same thing at odd times day after day. We always started marching very early in the morning, sometimes at three o'clock, and it was mighty cold. We had only a cup of coffee and a biscuit for breakfast, so I was not surprised to find Colonel Napier and Captain Brown not far from my side, and

with a smile I would produce that magic silver flask, and they would pronounce the contents rattling good and very acceptable. But they were awfully puzzled as to how I kept up the supply, and at last they could not resist the temptation of asking me.

“Where do you get it from, Prior?” But for answer I just looked at them as though in amazement at such a question. It never occurred to the Colonel or to any of them to inquire what was in that tin box. If they had they would have found that instead of sketch-books and clothes, which I carried easily in my saddlebags, there were two dozen bottles of whisky. At dead of night I used to open my tin box, extract a bottle, and then fill up my holster flask, which just held a bottle, and from this I was able to keep my silver flask always full.

The tin box was a source of much worry as well as pleasure, for I had to send for it as soon as we halted for the night. Our troopers, as well as Tommies, are very apt to be inquisitive about anything that looks out of the way and does not belong to them. In the daytime I knew it was quite safe, but at night—well, I have known very funny things occur in the dark in camp, quite as strange as at home. As an instance I may say I have known a Chinaman who borrowed a case of brandy, bored holes in the bottom of the bottles, extracted the spirit, and replaced it with coloured water. Then, with the aid of a blow-pipe, he sealed it up once again, and returned the case without any one suspecting it had been tampered with. Many times afterwards Colonel Napier had a hearty laugh about the heaviness of my “clothes-basket,” as he called it.

One morning we succeeded in getting at the Matabele, and we gave them an awful doing, the impi falling back crestfallen. Our spies told us afterwards that they had a large number of wounded, most of whom would die, as they had no doctors. The officer in charge of one of our fighting columns was the secretary of the Buluwayo Club, a Major Macfarlane. He was acknowledged to be a fine soldier, and had handled his little band in a masterly manner. Unfortunately we lost four men killed and a lot wounded in this last skirmish. One has to realise that these men were not soldiers, but were merchants, storekeepers, prospectors, and miners, with wives and families there, so that when they were killed or wounded it was felt very sadly in town.

Day after day we had been marching, occasionally coming

across small numbers of the enemy (who never stayed long), when early one morning it was announced that the column coming from Salisbury was in sight. This was quite good news, and within a quarter of an hour Mr. Cecil Rhodes was shaking hands with Colonel Napier and both Staffs were exchanging greetings, while troopers told of the miraculous escapes they and their families had experienced. Others, alas! had but sorry tales to tell. Some had lost their wives, others their fathers, brothers, sisters, massacred by the Matabele in this unfortunate insurrection.

Mr. Rhodes appeared very pleased to see me, and introduced me to his two friends, Mr. Charles Medcalf and Mr. C. W. Jarvis, and when the two columns laagered for the night he invited me to dinner. He had a very good cook with him, and the pie that fellow could produce was a dream. Perhaps I was very hungry, but I shall ever remember it. The whisky also was very good, no better than mine, but cheaper.

On the following morning we set out on our return to Buluwayo, and funnily enough the worst or best fight (as you like it) we had during the whole time we were away was on the march back. It was one in which Dr. Vine and myself very nearly lost our lives.

Colonel Napier was fortunate in having the assistance of two noted scouts, one an American named Burnham, well known in America as a great hunter and a tracker of Indians. It was said he could even smell a coloured man ten miles off. The other was a Mr. Swinburne, an English gentleman, madly fond of travelling and adventure. They had been away trying to find out where the main body of the enemy was located. At last they came in touch with it, and returned to inform Colonel Napier. But they did not get into our laager without a struggle, for a small body of the enemy had very slyly tried to cut them off. Each time they endeavoured to gallop in they were outflanked by the wily niggers. At last, however, they succeeded in giving the Matabele the slip, and got safely into camp, with their horses very exhausted but both men full of the excitement of the adventure.

After a kind of council of war Colonel Napier sent out Captain Vonniekirk with his Afrikander corps and Commandant Rensburg with a hundred more to reconnoitre the position indicated by Burnham. They left about 4.30 in

the morning, and at about eight o'clock they came up with the enemy, for we heard heavy firing, and Mr. Selous, with another hundred men, was sent out to see what was going on, Mr. Cecil Rhodes accompanying him.

I was very busy working up sketches for home, so did not go out, but when a man came galloping in to say our troops were heavily engaged with two large impi's, and asking for reinforcements and more ammunition, it seemed serious, and I altered my arrangements. Colonel Napier said he could not send out many more men as he had to protect the laager, which was a large one, but he sent horses loaded with ammunition, and gave orders for those already fighting to retreat, and he would attack *en masse* later on. I then suggested to Dr. Vine that we should go out with the ammunition and see what was going on, and away we went, led by the man who came in with the news. He very naturally returned to where he had left the troops, but, unfortunately, when we arrived at the spot we could not find a sign of them. So the horses with the ammunition were left at the base while we went up a small kopje, and very carefully we scanned the country all round with our glasses. We could hear firing, but could not see a sign of our men anywhere. We therefore returned to the horses and continued. By this time we were rather anxious, not only about our fighting army, but about ourselves, for here were we, three white men with a few friendly natives, in charge of a large quantity of ammunition at least four miles from camp and in the heart of the enemy's position.

It was not altogether a pleasant situation. The man who brought in the news was quite certain that this was the spot to which he was told to return, and nothing we could say would make him alter his mind. So telling him to remain in the open I said the doctor and I would go up the kopje near us and see what we could make out of the position of affairs, and would wave our handkerchiefs to him. This he agreed was perhaps the best thing under the circumstances to be done. As soon as we arrived on the top of the kopje we both produced our glasses and scanned the country all round. We heard firing, but could not see a solitary figure. We had been at this game for some time when the doctor said, "Are those our men on that big kopje over on our right front, Prior?" I had a splendid pair of Zeiss glasses, ever so much



MATABILI REVOLT—MR. CECIL RHODES WATCHING THE SHELLING OF ONE OF THE ENEMY'S POSITIONS.

more powerful than his old, antiquated opera things, and looking towards the spot he indicated (it was a considerable distance) I found to my dismay that they were not our men but about two hundred of the enemy, rushing up and down and all round it in a most excited manner, and to our worse horror we could see a number of them crawling through the mealie fields towards us with the evident intention of trying to surround us and if possible cut us off. After a very hurried consultation with the doctor we decided that our best plan was to get as quickly as possible down from the kopje to warn the man with the ammunition and make a bolt back to our camp. But why are horses so perverse at times? Here were we in a nasty fix, and yet the more we tried to make them move quickly the slower they walked.

It was a case of either riding down over steep and slippery ground at the risk of a broken neck or getting caught by the enemy. So we decided to mount, and then slid and stumbled down the side of the mountain to the bottom.

Fortunately for us Mr. Selous and his party, who were not engaged in fighting, but were protecting the retreat of the others, had been watching us and our predicament from the edge of the bush, and he sent out a number of his men to assist us to escape by harassing the enemy who were trying to get at us. Cecil Rhodes, who was also watching, was awfully afraid we should not get away in time, but the fine fellows poured in a few volleys and the Matabele fell back.

When descending the kopje we could not see the enemy down below in the mealie field, and did not know how dangerous our position had really been until we reached Rhodes and Selous and the question was thrashed out. Then Dr. Vine and I shook hands and congratulated ourselves on our lucky escape.

On this march we very often came across most pathetic scenes—the skeletons of men and women, once prosperous storekeepers, miners, and farmers, who had been killed in cold blood by the Matabele. In one case a woman who had been married only six months, hearing of the brutalities that the enemy were perpetrating as they advanced, left her home and ran for her life to inform other storekeepers, but was overtaken on the road. She was handed over to the Matabele women, who stoned her to death. Father Barthelemy and

I, riding together a little way from the column, came across her skeleton, with the clothes on it, just as she had been left. Dismounting from our horses, we looked on this sad sight with heads uncovered, while Father Barthelemy, covering his eyes with his hands, offered up a silent prayer, with tears rolling down his cheek. He then went in search of a spade from the commissariat wagons, and returning to the spot he dug a grave, and then placed the skeleton in it as well as he could, being very careful not to leave even one of the smallest bones unburied.

I was very often with Father Barthelemy, and we used to ride side by side a great deal. Many times we came across different skeletons, and sometimes a scattered collection of bones, for the vultures had been at work, but he would collect them most carefully, even to picking up the smallest bones he could find. I was very cross with him when using his hands for that purpose, I was so afraid of his getting poisoned. On each occasion he performed the burial rites, at which I assisted as grave-digger, and then we would ride on and join the force, which had been marching all the time. But I shall ever remember the reverent and careful way in which he performed the duties, and how particularly earnest he was.

One day I ventured to say, "You are a Roman Catholic, are you not? How do you know that these skeletons belong to Catholics?" He said, "I do not know at all;" then looking at me he said, "Surely a few words of entreaty to God Almighty can do no harm whether the bones belonged to people of one faith or another."

Making sketches in an expedition of this kind is one thing, but getting them away by post is quite another. I sent one batch through Colonel Napier's despatch-riders, but two men out of the three who started returned, one of them wounded, saying they had been attacked on the road, and the man who carried the bag was killed, so the despatches and my sketches were lost.

On another occasion we were going through some thorn-bush when a native's head was seen to pop up from behind a bush. One of our scouts raised his rifle, fired, and down went the head. When we came up to it we found to our great regret that it was a woman. She had been shot through the head, and a baby was lying by her side. We had several

women prisoners with babies whom we had captured, so this extra one was handed over to them to be looked after. It was an unlucky shot, but one that could not be avoided. It was impossible at a distance to tell a woman's head from a man's, and experience had taught our men the absolute necessity of getting in the first shot if possible, for the natives would occasionally sneak up and from behind cover fire at one of the advance guard and bolt for all they were worth, and these beggars get over the ground at a tremendous pace.

I see by my notes that I only had my boots off three times in fifteen days, for we all had to sleep in our clothes, with our arms beside us, in case of a surprise visit from the enemy.

At last, after having burnt all the kraals we came across, and harassed the enemy as much as we could, so much so that he had cleared right away, Colonel Napier returned to Buluwayo. But although the enemy had retreated from us on the march they were not beaten by any means, for they followed us later to Buluwayo, and once more we had to turn out and go for them. It was on this occasion that I saw a most horrible sight. Four men on picket duty up at Government House, which was a mile and a half outside the town, were so engrossed in watching the fight which was taking place below them in the plains that they did not observe an impi, about four hundred strong, sneaking round and trying to cut them off. I was up in what was called the crow's-nest, a high position overlooking the whole country, and with my glasses I could see the Matabele surrounding these four men, and could also see that the men had not the slightest suspicion of their danger. There was no way in which we could warn them, yet one and all of us looking on from the crow's-nest longed to scream out to them, for they appeared so near through our powerful glasses, and their plight seemed so sad. Suddenly, however, they saw the enemy, and, realising their danger, started a ride for life into the town. Unfortunately on one side of them was a barbed-wire fence, which they could not get through, and their only means of escape was by riding along the front of the Matabele, who were rapidly advancing. These were mostly armed with spears, but I saw half a dozen or more kneel down and take steady pot-shots, and the next moment I saw one of our men hit and he fell off his horse. It was utterly impossible for the other men to render him

assistance, and as it was only two of them got away to safety. The riderless horse was white, and it kept on its mad career straight into the town, and it was soon discovered that it had belonged to a man named Parsons, whose body was found later on covered with assegai wounds.

During this incident the main body of the enemy had such a thrashing that they retired in disorder, and it was not thought that they would venture again near to Buluwayo. So Mr. Cecil Rhodes, in company with Sir Charles Medcalf and Mr. Jarvis, took up their quarters in Government House, and I very often used to go up and see them and have chats. On one occasion Mr. Rhodes said, "You stay here with me, Prior; write to your office and say you are going to stop with me, and if you do I'll make your fortune for you." This sounded very fine, and I thanked him over and over again for his kindness, but I pointed out to him that I was a servant of my office and felt bound to obey them, and that I must return to England and report myself. (I expect this was one of the golden opportunities that many men before me have lost through adherence to duty.)

CHAPTER XIII

THE AFRIDI CAMPAIGN. 1897

TROUBLE in India once more found me on the move. The Afridis and the Orakzais had been behaving very badly in the Tirah, and Sir William Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief of the North-West frontier, was about to advance with an army of 30,000 men to punish them.

On the way out, at Rawalpindi to be precise, I met Mr. René Bull, who was acting as special artist to *Black and White*, and we arranged to journey together. In the end we lived together, messed together, and returned together.

On arrival at headquarters we found that Sir William Lockhart was a charming man, and he most kindly invited Mr. René Bull and myself to pitch our tents in the headquarter camp.

I arrived, fortunately, just in time to witness that historical attack on Darghai. The Gurkhas had advanced and had been beaten back: the Sikhs had also been beaten back, and Sir William, finding the enemy were holding the crest of the hill and the Shragrukotal Pass very fiercely, was, I should imagine, slightly puzzled. The guns were shelling the position, but nothing seemed to move the enemy from their sangars, and at last he signalled to Colonel Mathias of the Gordon Highlanders that this position in front of him must be taken at all costs. Colonel Mathias, as coolly as though on parade, turned to his men, and the word was passed down, that "the General has signalled to us that this position must be taken at all costs. The Gordon Highlanders will take it!" The men received this order with ringing cheers, and, as their pipes began to skirl, they rushed to the attack. They were under a furious fire, the bullets rained thick upon them, but they went on clambering upwards

until at last they carried the stronghold in what has been described as "superb style." During this onslaught Piper Findlater, though wounded in both legs, continued playing the pibroch. Once the heights were taken the enemy fled in all directions, and then preparations were made for an advance over the hills and into a country where it was said that no foreigner had ever penetrated. But what awful travelling it was! Sometimes the way up the passes was so steep that it was impossible to ride, so we used to get off our horses and get hold of their tails, and let them pull us up; while on the other side one felt inclined to slip down. But on the 28th of October we pitched camp just in sight of and under the Sam-pugga Pass.

We usually dined very early so as to get under cover as far as possible before the night sniping began. One evening we were having dinner outside our tent, and just close handy to the General's, when suddenly the enemy opened a tremendous fire, and, it was evident, at very close quarters, no doubt aimed at Sir William Lockhart's tent. We drank our soup as quickly as possible, and then called for the meat, but before we had finished we both exclaimed together that we could stand it no longer, and were about to jump up and bolt for cover when a bullet struck the whisky bottle on the table between us, smashing it to smithereens. The General then called out and asked us if we would like to go and sit behind his sandbags. It was then discovered that some of the enemy had succeeded in sneaking inside our pickets, and it was they who were giving us all this trouble. So a company of Gurkhas was sent out, and they very soon cleared off those gentlemen. But on the following night we were treated to the same sort of entertainment.

Then it occurred to me that the commissariat compound with grain and sugar-bags would make a splendid place for us to sleep in. So I went and asked Captain Palin, who was in charge, and he was delighted to do all he could, and he made us awfully comfortable. So I sent over my bedding, and my servants slept in my tent behind boxes. In the morning when I returned I found two holes in my tent, and that one of the bullets had split my wooden bedstead just under where my head would have been. The camp was in a horrible position in a valley with hills all round, so it gave the enemy every



GORDON HIGHLANDERS AND GURKHAS TAKING DARGHAI RIDGE.

chance. That night we lost seven men killed and a lot wounded.

Another night a party of Gurkhas asked permission to be allowed to go out and lie down in wait, in the hopes that the enemy would try their tactics again. They took off their boots, so as to move about the rocks with more ease, and lay down in wait with their kookries, and sure enough the ruse was successful; for as soon as the enemy opened fire they jumped up from their hiding-place and killed every one of them, not one single man being lost on our side. The Afridis did not venture so close again after this, but went on peppering from the hills.

When we attacked the Sampugga Pass a division was sent out at 4 a.m. to take up a position on the enemy's left, another division on the right, and we were to take the centre. It was a magnificent sight to see the Gurkhas, Sikhs, and our own regiments clambering heights which seemed impossible to get up, under the fire of the Afridis, who were behind sangas (stone defences). Six batteries of mountain guns were brought into action, and they made such splendid practice that the enemy must have been very discomfited, and our men took all their positions one after another.

I remember when riding up country asking myself the question whether I would be able to stand bullets as I had done in the past, and whether my nerve had changed, and I found on the occasion of this fight that I was hiding behind a house instead of watching and sketching the fight as it went on, and I said to myself, "You are a coward!" and as a punishment I went and sat between two guns that were banging away, and made a careful sketch of the ridge from where the enemy were firing, and the bullets were whizzing about like hail. That was my atonement.

Nothing I could sketch or write could possibly give an idea of the steepness of the path and the struggle it was to get up it, and yet we all did go over this ridge and then descended into the Arhanga Plain, and 30,000 pack animals with commissariat luggage went over that same pass with only one or two casualties. I have seen the mules of a mountain battery clambering over positions and up heights that even men have found it difficult to get over. I have always said that if put to it they would go up the side of a house.

I was riding round the edge of a mountain with a sheer

descent of 2,000 feet, when one of my mules in front of me, with two cases of whisky and stores and some of my clothes, made a false step, or rather a stone gave way under its hind-foot, and the next moment he was toppling over, and I had the misfortune to see him and my whisky bumping from ledge to ledge till he reached the bottom. I did not mind losing the mule or the clothes, but the two cases of whisky—that was an irreparable loss!

On the 31st we started in the same kind of formation to take the Arhangga Pass, which we found was not as difficult as we had thought. The road or narrow path was very horrible, and this time, remembering the enormous number of commissariat mules that had to go over in single file, I did not expect to see my luggage; but, by Jove! my head-man proved himself a clever fellow, for just as night fell I saw the whole of our mules and belongings coming over the ridge, and we had our tent pitched and our dinner ready even before the head-quarter Staff transport came in. The thermometer this night went down to 23°, and in our tent we had half an inch of ice in the morning. I have often said since my return from this North-West frontier that I never knew what cold was until I went there. In the daytime the sun is so strong that you have to wear a thick pith helmet, and then about four o'clock a wind seems to start, so sharp that it cuts through anything. You put on a coat; at half-past four you put on another coat, and so you go on until you cannot get anything more on. The officers all wore pushteens (sheep-skin coats with the wool inside). At night I had my bed on the ground with a double waterproof sheet, and I had a thick quilted bag into which I crawled, over this two rugs and great ulster and another waterproof sheet; and yet with all these I was cold.

As soon as we arrived in the heart of the enemy's country, the Midan Valley, we were told that we were likely to stop for some time, until the enemy gave in.

One night there was a very nasty incident. A convoy of ammunition and specie was coming over the pass, and was only half a dozen miles from camp, when it was attacked by about three hundred of the enemy. At the first volley away scampered the ponies to the number of seventy-two, and three men of the 1st Queen's were cut down with swords, and four others were badly wounded. Lance-Corporal Simpson, who



BAGGAGE GUARD OF THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT BEATING OFF AN ATTACK ON A CONVOY.

was in charge, called his men round him and beat the enemy off, and for twenty minutes this brave little band of twelve men resisted the rushes of the Afridis, until a company of the Northhamptons came up to their assistance. But the ponies with the ammunition and money were not recovered—a nice haul for the enemy. Corporal Simpson was made full sergeant on the following day for his behaviour during the action.

Talking of the cold reminds me that before leaving England Lord Dundonald presented me with two "Instras." An "Instra" is a kind of heating apparatus resembling in shape and size a silver cigar-case, inside of which one puts a charcoal cigar, and it will keep alight for four or five hours, and if kept in the pocket or hung down the back inside the coat it imparts a splendid glow all over one. I gave one of these to General Lockhart, and on more than one occasion he said he believed I had saved his life. He found it very comforting.

At Maidan, when we halted, we all devised different arrangements for protection against the enemy's sniping. At last I felt horribly sick of bullets; I found them so very affectionate on this trip! Sir Pertab Singh built a perfect little fort. One evening I saw him sitting in front of his little encampment looking into the fire while I and others were crouching behind a wall, and rising and bringing over his lantern to where we were, he laughed at us very superciliously, and then went back to his stool by the fire. Presently the enemy gave us one or two nasty volleys, and three of the bullets went into Sir Pertab's fire, and it really was amusing to see the way in which he jumped up and made for the shelter of his fort. It was our turn then, so we took up our lanterns and went and had a look at him, with smiles. He was very good-natured over it, though. The firing was so hot that he gave us a drink and asked if we would like to sleep in his hut.

Some two days before this René Bull and myself had had a hole dug by the side of a bank which was some five feet high, and had thrown the earth up on either side, intending to put our tent in it, but we had been so busy that we could not afford the time to move the tent. But now, as it was impossible to sleep on level ground, we called up all our men, pulled down our tent, and soon had it pitched in this hole; then we put boxes and sandbags in the front, and succeeded in making

ourselves absolutely safe from bullets. Here we made our sketches, here we slept, while we heard the whiz and the ping of the little bits of lead flying over our heads. Sometimes we had worse nights than others, and, to be honest, I at last felt very sick of the enemy's attention.

Extract from a letter home : " Our sick and wounded list is over a hundred each day. Four days ago we had a Jirgah (a meeting) of about a hundred of the principal men of the Afridi tribes, and Sir William Lockhart in the end imposed on them 30,000 rupees and 500 rifles, and they seemed so pleased at being let off so cheaply that we personally thought it would be all right, and that we should have no more trouble with them. But two days after, on our foraging party going out to buy grain and forage from them, they attacked as usual, so that meeting is all at an end, and we are now as we were before, and nothing left but to fight. Just at the moment our buglers are sounding the ' Last Post,' and the enemy has just sent a volley into them, so we are enjoying ourselves ! A man was hit, for I heard him shriek out. Sir William Lockhart, I am sure, was very disappointed at the result of the Jirgah, and the enemy won't come down and give us an honest fight, and we cannot possibly get at them in the mountains, so there we are, and the same sort of game may go on for months or even years." Continuing, I find I say : " It was quite a sad sight to see the funeral of six officers to-day, fine young fellows who were killed yesterday, together with twenty-five men. The General and Staff and a great number of officers attended the funeral. Altogether I hear we had seventy casualties last night."

I have had many disagreeable moments campaigning, but I do not think I have had a more unpleasant one than when, chatting with Sir Pertab Singh, a bullet came across my eyes so closely that the wind affected them, and for the time being I could scarcely see. I was not so prepared to smile that time.

Our next camping-ground was Bagh. Here the constant firing into the camp by the tribesmen under cover of night at last became so insufferable that Sir William Lockhart, having frequently warned the enemy, but all to no purpose, ordered General Gaselee and his brigade to fire the villages nearest to our camp. The conflagration formed a curious spectacle. The

smoke rose from the different houses and roof-towers in straight columns, and then at some height from the ground collected into a mass so dense that at 8.30 in the morning, no wind having arisen to clear the atmosphere, the light of day was completely obscured. This object-lesson certainly had the desired effect, for, with the exception of a few stray shots from roving sharpshooters, we remained for some time unmolested.

The enemy was giving us a bad time from a particular sangar above our camp, and Captain Playfair, with a force of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, stormed the position. It was a very spirited affair; our men had to climb almost precipitous rocks and then rush the enemy's position under fire so close that not many yards were between the officer in command and the foremost Afridi. After a brave stand, however, the tribesmen, sustaining considerable loss, retreated down a wooded ravine in double-quick time. This must have had a very salutary effect, for later on the Maliks, or chieftains, most of them of very venerable age, came into our camp again to hear the announcement of the Government terms of peace. They were formed up in a semicircle in front of Sir William Lockhart and his Staff, and Sir Richard Udny, who spoke their language with ease, recited to them the terms of peace. After assuring Sir William Lockhart through Sir Richard that they understood the terms proposed, the Orakzais representatives withdrew and put their agreement to the conditions into practical effect by surrendering all loot and arms, collecting a fine of 30,000 rupees, and by carrying out the various clauses of the compact.

Not long before peace was arranged five companies of the Northampton Regiment were returning from the Saransah Heights when they met with what might almost be called a disaster. The enemy swarmed up on the ridges, and the retiring troops, burdened with their wounded, were exposed to a stiff fire on either side of the nullah. The 36th Sikhs went out to assist them, but even with this reinforcement the withdrawing forces had a further loss in the difficult task of bringing down the wounded. The tribesmen's knowledge of the ground, broken by intersecting ravines, gave them so much the advantage. However, the Northampton brought all their wounded comrades into camp before dark.

In the course of the action on the Saran Ridge Lieutenant

MacIntyre and twelve men were cut off from the rest of the force, but their loss was not realised until the camp was reached, and at daybreak the whole regiment, with a force of Gurkhas and two guns, went in search of the missing men. The dead bodies of this handful of heroes were found with gunshot wounds, which testified to their gallant end. Several of these men must have deliberately chosen death rather than escape by abandoning their wounded comrades.

The cold was so intense, and I had been so many times ill with fever and rheumatism, that the doctors advised me to go down country, and at last the Surgeon-General absolutely ordered me away, and as apparently there was going to be no more fighting, René Bull decided to join me, and we started for Rawalpindi with a convoy of sick and wounded. It was very slow travelling at first, but eventually we arrived at Kohat, which I think might be called the advance base, and here we found a baboo running a kind of restaurant.

From here to Rawalpindi we took seats in the post tonga, and let our men bring our horses and baggage down slowly. In about a fortnight I had so far recovered that I decided to go up to Bashara and meet Sir William, who was reported to be making for that town. But here again I was attacked by bad sickness, and I determined on going straight down country to Bombay. I telegraphed to my office to say I was returning, and should be home for Christmas, and while waiting for a particular P. & O. steamer I thought I would like to visit and make some sketches in connection with the plague.

This terrible disease, after being held in check for some time, though never completely routed, had burst forth with extraordinary malignancy in Bombay, and the number of deaths from its effects in one week reached the alarming total of 651. Every precaution that medical science could employ in checking the ravages of the epidemic had been taken by the authorities. The chief sanitary measures promoted while the last outbreak was at its worst had, indeed, never been relaxed. One of these was the house-to-house visits by the members of the various local committees which had been formed, and I asked permission to be allowed to accompany the president of the local committee for the native quarter, who was accompanied always by a native doctor and several

police. We started at seven o'clock in the morning. Information in the first instance was generally obtained from paid spies as to where the sufferers of the plague, or dead bodies of the victims, were concealed, owing to the reluctance of their families to submit to quarantine or segregation. Each day a certain number of streets were closed and visited by the committees, and I was much struck by the readiness with which the men, women, and children submitted to the examination, holding out the wrists for the feeling of the pulse, and sticking out the tongue, but the trouble was to find the plague-stricken themselves. In one house that I visited I found it so packed that at night the men, women, and children could only sleep like sardines in a box. Having searched every room I was about to descend when my eye caught a ladder; going up here in the semi-darkness I entered a loft, and with the aid of a candle I saw in a distant corner a huddled heap of rags, which turned out to be a plague-stricken native, just on the point of dying. This was my first individual find, and it was not long before he was brought down, and he actually died in the street. It was quite evident that the people in the house knew of his being there, but refused to give any information about it. I was so pleased at having found this man off my own bat that I continued my individual searching with zest, and in the end found no less than three very bad cases; one was in a large wool store—he was crouching behind two bales.

My luggage had been put on the P. & O. steamer, and I was just leaving the hotel, when René Bull came running along with a telegram which he said he had just received from Cook's agent. On opening it I found it was from my office, ordering me to go to China and join the Germans at Kiauchau. Away went all my dreams of Christmas in my own house at home. There was nothing left, however, but to obey, so I fetched my luggage from the steamer and started off on another expedition; but as it yielded no very exciting adventures and was a peaceful journey all reference to it may be omitted from this book.

CHAPTER XIV

CRETE. 1897

IN the beginning of 1897 the newspapers were full of the crisis in the Near East. Crete was the troublesome spot. The Turks in the island, though in the minority, were in power, and the Cretans, or Christians, were in rebellion. Many times they had had a go at arguing the point as to who was right or wrong with powder and shot, but this time it was quite a serious matter. The Cretans were determined to turn out the Turks; the Turks in return were determined to hold their supremacy; and the position was thought quite serious enough for my office to send me out. The latest news was that the Turks and the Christian inhabitants were cutting each other's throats and burning each other's houses in the good old style.

On my arrival at the Piræus Messrs. Cook's agent met me, and after an hour's drive I reached Athens. On the following morning I went down to the port and witnessed the embarkation of the 3rd Battery of Artillery for the town of Volo, just on the Turkish frontier. It certainly looked a very serviceable battery, and the men and officers were in the highest spirits and seemed to do their business in a very workmanlike manner.

The Greeks are cruel people to animals. It made me almost sick, on my way back to the hotel, to see horses in carts pulling heavy loads and so lame that they could hardly stand. One had evidently a broken ankle-joint, and yet the driver was thrashing him, and in another case the horse was in such pain that his nose bobbed down almost to the ground at each step.

The next morning I journeyed on the steamer from the Piræus to Canea in Crete.

During the day we felt pretty safe and secure in Canea, but

at night it was sometimes very unpleasant. We were in a Greek house, and there was always murder and robbery going on somewhere in the town, so that when my host (Mr. Lyghones) and myself were left quite alone—my companion Bickford-Smith having gone away on a trip—we felt almost nervous at times. One night we distinctly heard voices in argument quite close to us. We searched the house all over, revolvers in hand, and we knew the houses on either side of us were empty, but we could not find out where the voices came from. It turned out afterwards that some Bashi-Bazouks had actually got on to the roof of an outhouse and were contemplating attacking and robbing us, but had fallen out among themselves. After this I never moved an inch without my revolver, and when reading or drawing at night I always had it on the table by my side. Working under these conditions is not agreeable.

I hope the reader of this little account will understand that the Turks at this particular time were in possession of the town, and that the Christians, or Insurgents, were outside. The latter gentlemen had playful little ways of coming down from their fastnesses and hills and worrying the Turks by getting across the road and doing what was called "closing" it.

There was an American correspondent on the island, John Bass, representing a New York paper—a good fellow, plucky as a lion—and he and I became very good friends. He wanted to go and see the Insurgents and pay a visit to Colonel Vassos, their chief. He persuaded me to accompany him, and, having after much trouble obtained from the Turkish Governor a written permit to pass the Turkish sentries and outposts, we started off one morning, just the two of us, well mounted, with a whisky flask, a few biscuits, and a tin of meat. We only had a few hours' riding to do, but our difficulty, as well as disagreeable job, was to pass the Turkish lines and to enter those of the Insurgents. We felt certain that we should be fired on in both instances, and so we were, but only, I imagine, as a warning or a precautionary measure. With the Turks we heard two or three shots go over our heads; then we waved our flag, a white handkerchief on a stick; then an officer came down from a little fort on the hills, examined our papers, and allowed us to pass. We had not gone far when we heard more bullets—Bashi-Bazouks looking out for loot. Fortunately they

missed us, and these disagreeable reminders put us into a hard canter. After a sharp ride of about an hour we heard more shots. These were the Insurgents; more flying of the white handkerchief, and then two magnificent specimens of manhood emerged from behind bushes and advanced towards us. We explained to them as well as we could under the circumstances that we wished to see Colonel Vassos.

It turned out that the Colonel had issued instructions that if any Englishmen did wish to join his camp they were to be shown every politeness and were to be conducted to him. So we were all right, and when we arrived at his quarters, which were in a house in a pretty little village, we were most cordially received. While John Bass obtained all the information he wanted, I was permitted to go about and make as many sketches as I liked. I was perfectly astonished to see how excellent their hospital arrangements were, and how good and kind they were to their wounded Turkish prisoners. These latter declared to me, through an interpreter, that they did not want to go back to their own people—they were far too happy where they were; and I am not surprised at it, for the Turks who were fighting in Crete because they were ordered to do so by their Sultan had very little heart in it. They had no money, they were never paid—the Turkish soldier very seldom is—and their clothes were in rags, and patched with any old piece of cloth they could get hold of. In many cases a brave Turkish soldier—and a brave fellow he is—very often looked like the Scriptural Joseph with his coat of many colours.

We spent the night with Colonel Vassos, and were fed like fighting-cocks, and we left the next morning in time to get back before dusk, as we knew very well that we would once more be received with a *feu-de-joie* of bullets. And so it turned out, until we halted, and then the same process went on—officers came down, interviewed us, took as many cigarettes from us as we could produce, and allowed us to continue on to the town of Canea.

The Turkish gendarmerie corps in the town did not seem to get on very well with their colonel, and the English Admiral had sent on shore an officer of Marines to see what he could do to pacify them, and to put them through their paces in a soldierly manner. The officer was Major Bor, a fine fellow, plucky as they make them, standing

about 6 feet 2 inches. He had been working with them for some little time, and the gendarmes had become quite fond of him. Unfortunately they did not receive any pay, and their colonel, whom they disliked, having been extra severe with them, they mutinied. Italian bluejackets landed and surrounded the barracks, and the gendarmes were then called upon to surrender their arms, but their reply to this was to come out of their rooms and stand sullenly in the hall. Their colonel, under the protection of Bor, was arguing the point with them, when one of the mutineers raised his rifle and shot him dead. This was the commencement of a regular fusillade all round. Major Bor, in his quiet, plucky, impressive manner, did his utmost to stop the row before calling for assistance from the Italians outside, but without success, however, and at last the bluejackets had to take the matter in hand, and poured a deadly volley in through the open doorway, killing a number of the mutineers. The rest then bolted back to their rooms, where they were disarmed and then paraded. Several of us correspondents, including Bass and Smith, were upstairs just above where the row was going on, and we fully expected the mutineers would rush up and finish us off. So we had a lively five minutes! But these little *émeutes* soon came to an end, and the next morning, barring the funerals, no one would have known that anything unforeseen had occurred.

This Major Bor, by his pluck and tact, succeeded in ingratiating himself with the Turks in Canea. On one occasion I remember so well the Turkish troops had succeeded in catching a number of the Insurgents on a spit of land running out into the sea. They were hopelessly in a trap, and would have been massacred to a man. Fighting had been proceeding for some hours when the Admiral sent Major Bor and a lieutenant to stop the Turks from advancing; in fact, to withdraw them, and give the Cretans a chance to retire into the interior. Major Bor's efforts were absolutely successful. It did not seem fair fighting, for the Cretan Insurgents had no means of escape, and their offers to surrender would never have been accepted; they would simply have been finished off.

Above Suda Bay there was a Turkish fort called Malaxa, which had been invested for some time by the Cretans. It was a stronghold, and without guns it was quite impossible to

take it. The six Powers that were bolstering up the Turks had warned the Christians to leave Malaxa fort alone. But these men refused absolutely and defied the Powers, the result being that one morning the ships bombarded the Insurgents all round this fort, and while this was going on a large number of Turkish soldiers managed to escape from it and rushed down a ravine as fast as their legs could carry them to the shore. But only a certain proportion arrived safely, for the Cretans poured in a deadly fire and bowled a number of them over. They had even openly boasted that they would come down from the hills and capture the town of Canea, and at one time they were within a mile of it. We might have had a bad time, for we were not much more than a thousand men, and they were about ten thousand strong.

It so happened that John Bass, the American correspondent I have spoken of before, with two Greek officers had gone up to visit the Insurgents at Malaxa fort, and were trying their best to persuade them to conform to the wishes of the Powers, and to allow the Turks to leave the fort in safety. At last they agreed to do so, and when the bombardment was at its height, and the *Camperdown* was throwing shells from her heaviest guns, John Bass and his two companions entered the fort and succeeded in persuading the Turks to come out, and guaranteed them safety. It was a marvellously plucky thing to do, and eventually the Turkish troops that had remained there came away. It was quite an affecting sight to see the two old officers clinging to Bass, while the two Greeks stood in front waving their hands to the Insurgents to keep quiet. And this they did, I believe, out of sheer admiration for the magnificent pluck of this little American and his two companions. The fact remains, after all, that the Turkish garrison was rescued by these three men.

It was not long after that the Seaforth Highlanders landed, and the Turkish barracks had to be made ready for them. But what a job it was! The filth was really too awful, and our Marines, assisted by some of the Turks, had the job of cleaning it up. The actual landing of the Seaforth Highlanders was a great event, particularly when the pipers, leading the regiment, entered the town through the harbour gate. There is no doubt that the landing of this regiment had the desired effect on the Insurgents, for they did not venture too near the town afterwards.

Just above the town of Canea was a fort, with a bastion on which were erected seven flag-staffs, upon which the flags of the six European Powers were flying round the Turkish one with Star and Crescent, and soldiers of the different nations were there to protect them. It was quite interesting to walk round and watch the Turkish soldier in the centre, then the Russian, Austrian, French, German, Italian, and English sailor or soldier on guard; each had a tent.

The Admirals were constantly having to communicate with the Insurgents in the mountains, and the messengers would go up and return under a flag of truce without going near any of the villages. At last I thought I would like to visit the Insurgents above Canea (anything to obtain copy and sketches), and for that purpose I went up to the village of Hellepar, which was in the hands of the Turks with Turkish outposts. I went on to the roof of the nearest house to the Insurgents to see if I could make out the best road to take, and was standing up looking through my glasses, when I heard the ping of a bullet, followed by several more. A Turkish officer begged me to come down as the Insurgents were evidently firing at me. This was bad luck and spoilt my intention. Nevertheless, I left the village; then, taking to the open fields, I waved a white handkerchief and advanced, but was only saluted with more bullets. Those Insurgents were mighty cute. They knew very well I was not the Admirals' messenger, or else they had seen me come out of the Turkish village. I was thus reluctantly compelled to give up my projected trip.

Part of the Seaforth Highlanders had come to Canea and another part had gone to Candia, and I thought I would run round by steamer to see how that part of Crete was getting on. I took my Turkish boy with me, but I do not think he was particularly happy over it, for he had never been on board a steamer before. It was an Austria-Lloyd ship, and was crammed with Turkish deck passengers leaving the island and bound for Smyrna. On the way down the coast I was informed that there was no hotel in Candia, but a Turkish hovel did service for one. Somehow or other the officers of the Seaforth Highlanders had expected that I would pay them a visit some time or another, and had voted that I should be made an honorary member of their mess when I arrived.

As soon as I landed, therefore, I was taken in charge by them, and soon found myself in their little encampment with a tent placed at my disposal. This was hospitality indeed. Having made what sketches I could of interest, I returned to Canea, only to find a telegram from my office ordering me to proceed at once to Constantinople and join the Turkish troops. All the time I had been in Crete the Greeks and Turks had been hammering away at each other for dear life. From Constantinople I returned to England, on learning that the Greeks had thrown up the sponge.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRANSVAAL WAR. 1900-1-2

SO many books have been written about the Transvaal War that I do not propose to do more than recall several little incidents that occurred to me personally.

At Southampton we went on board the Union Castle s.s. *Norman*, where I found General French with his Staff, and I was much amused one morning seeing him in close confab with a Mr. Kruger, who was a cousin of the old President. They were discussing the probabilities and possibilities of the conflict between the two nations. Maps were produced, and Kruger was explaining the country to General French. This young fellow was a rare sportsman, entered into all our games on board, and was cheered over and over again when making the biggest score in cricket of any one on board. More than once he chaffed us, saying, "We are very friendly here, but as soon as I land I am going to join my people and be your deadly enemy," and for our part we used to ask him in chaff that if ever we fell into his hands he would deal mercifully with us. He was one of those advanced and educated Boers most of whom are very charming men and good conversationalists.

I found many of the officers on board were being vaccinated with an anti-typhoid fever serum, and the doctor persuaded me to go through it. We were prepared with medicine the day before, and only allowed very light food and no drink. We felt very stiff the day after, and had rather bad headaches with a little fever. However, we were all very glad that we had been operated upon, for we were told that there was an awful amount of enteric in Natal.

At last we arrived at Cape Town, where we found the people in a state of great excitement. I was recommended

very strongly to go to Natal, which I decided to do, as I heard that General French was going there, and also because of the fact that the papers were publishing telegrams to the effect that the Boers had already crossed the Natal frontier. Then, too, Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*, and H. H. S. Pearse of the *Daily News*, had already arrived at Natal. The exodus of miners and others from up country was extraordinary, and there was not sufficient accommodation for them in the town. The steamboat offices were crowded all day long, and the chief passenger clerk assured me that he took £2,000 over the counter before nine o'clock one morning; every one who could was rushing home.

Then I heard there had been hard fighting at Dundee, and this made me all the more anxious to get to the front as soon as possible, so my travelling companion, Ernest Smith of the *Morning Leader*, and I purchased horses and started off by rail for Ladysmith. Here a most extraordinary piece of luck occurred. We arrived at the station, after a long and tedious journey, at about 5.30 in the morning. This was the terminus, for the Boer army was in possession of the line running further north. As soon as I got out of the train I noticed on the next line that which looked to me remarkably like an armour-clad train, and men and officers were very busy about it. Going up to an officer I asked him what they were going to do with that train, and he said, "We are going to run out on a reconnaissance towards the Boer lines, to mend the road destroyed by the Boers, and, if possible, get through to Dundee to find out how matters stand." I then asked if it were possible for us to go out with it. "Well," he said, "I cannot give you permission, but over there is the Brigade-Major in charge, and I dare say he would." This officer, knowing me well, readily granted permission. I hastily gave orders to our servants to take the horses and things down to the hotel and to try and take rooms for us, saying we would be back very shortly. I then got hold of a bottle of whisky and some water and three or four sandwiches, and after gulping down a cup of coffee as breakfast we jumped into this modern "ironclad on shore" and started off. I ought to mention that we had three trucks full of troops, the engine coming after the first one, and we travelled along very slowly, not knowing when we might come across the enemy. It was quite a hazardous

trip, for it was more by good luck than judgment that we were not caught by the enemy.

About a mile from Elandslaagte Station the presence of the Boers was made manifest by a boom, and then a shell burst within a hundred yards of us. This caused a slight commotion amongst the troops. And then another shell, which fell short; shortly after came another, which burst in front of the engine. This was getting rather warm, and we got out of that carriage and stood by the side of it. We pushed on a little, and then the order was given for the train to retire a short distance. All this time the enemy were peppering at us. I found out then that this was only a kind of flanking arrangement, for away on our left was General French with troops, and after reconnoitring the enemy's position as near as he could to Elandslaagte he came to the conclusion that the enemy was too strong for him. He had only the Imperial Light Horse and a battery of Natal Artillery, whose little guns were no match against those of the enemy, who made most excellent practice with three 15-pounders and, seeing the Boers were evidently bursting for a fight, he determined to fall back. The railway telegraph wires were then tapped by his Engineers, and he sent a message in to Sir George White in Ladysmith announcing the position of affairs and asking for reinforcements, and I believe the message returned was, "Am sending reinforcements, and coming out in person." So we all fell back a little and watched events, and while waiting for the correspondents and a fresh supply of troops I might tell you that I had noticed little Ernest Smith had behaved with remarkable coolness under his first fire, and I was perfectly satisfied that I had not done wrong in allowing him to join my show.

Sooner than I expected I found carts and carriages turning up with correspondents, and in the van was my dear old friend Bennet Burleigh, who, I am happy to say, had brought out food as well as drink, which I was mighty pleased to see. Then soon the troops began to arrive, the infantry regiments by train—the Gordon Highlanders, the Devons and the Manchesters, the 5th Dragoon Guards, the 5th Lancers, with a battery of artillery, and Sir George White then met General French. During their consultation as to the position of affairs I heard General French say, "I hand over the command of

this to you, sir," but General Sir George White, with his usual charming manner, replied, "Oh, no! You commenced the show, you carry on." Immediately French set to work. The Gordons and Manchesters were sent round on a long detour to get on the enemy's flank, and then our artillery started pounding the Boers' three guns which they had on a ridge of hills at Elandslaagte. They certainly gave us "toko for yam," and made it very warm for the headquarter Staff, for I saw a shell burst by the side of General White's horse, and as for me, I had a very bad time too. I could not make it out how all the shells seemed to come in my direction as well as the bullets, and never could I get anybody to come near me. If I advanced on one of the correspondents he ran away as though I were stricken with plague. At last Burleigh said, "Confound your white helmet, Prior; you are drawing all the fire!" It had never occurred to me that my white helmet with the sun on it was a magnificent target. I realised that if I took it off my bald head would act like a heliograph to them. What was I to do? Fortunately I had a waterproof cloak, so I took my helmet off, carried it under my arm, and flung the coat over my head; then crouched as low as I could, like the rest were doing, by the side of ant-heaps. This certainly had the right effect, for the shells left me and chose another objective.

By this time the Gordons and Manchesters had gradually crawled round, and the Devons were ordered to advance, and I need scarcely say that the correspondents followed up pretty closely—Bennet Burleigh, Levenson, Colonel Rhodes, Lynch, and myself—and the deuce of a hot time we had of it! I lost sight of Smith, but Burleigh and myself followed the Devons, and dodged and crawled along until we came to a wall and a tiny hut. From here we were able to watch the troops manœuvring in several directions, but the bullets were whizzing about like hail. I crouched behind the wall, but Burleigh, with that devil-may-care manner of his, leant up against the wall, and with binoculars watched the enemy's little tactics. I begged him to come down, for I felt certain he would be hit. By this time it was quite dusk, when the order was given that the Devons, Gordons, and Manchesters, and all our troops were to charge the enemy's position; and this was done in certainly magnificent style. As the infantry



ELANDSLAAGTE—CHARGE OF 5TH LANCERS. OCT. 21, 1899.

advanced the fire became hotter and hotter, until it rose in a crescendo of hissing vehemence as the supreme climax of the struggle was reached. General French afterwards owned to me that it was the hottest fire he had ever been under.

At a quarter to six rapid movements could be seen amongst the Boers, many of whom were commencing a headlong retreat, and amid a perfect shower of musketry the bugles sounded the final charge, and forward—rattling, stumbling, falling over the rocks, cheering, clambering—forward now went the Gordons, Devons, and Manchesters in a breathless climb, until the top of the hill was reached and the position won. As the Boers fled through the darkness the cavalry charged through and through them in spite of the broken and difficult nature of the ground. The Dragoons chased past a Red Cross tent where a man was waving a Red Cross flag. They respected those gathered about the tent, but one ruffian, waiting until they came abreast, shot point-blank at a trooper. As he fell dead from the saddle Captain Derbyshire rode at his slayer and shot him dead with his revolver. The ground was terrible for charging over. In the charge of the 5th Lancers there was a little bugler-boy, Sherlock, aged fourteen, who shot three Boers with his revolver. Tommy had behaved magnificently throughout this long fight, and now he was finishing the day by behaving as well to the Boer wounded, for on the top of the hill and down the sides he was groping about in the darkness for those who had been hit, and later on he placed them under wagons out of the wet or near to the camp fire. We had had a glorious day. Our artillery had a good chance and showed up well. The dauntless bravery of English officers we seem to take for granted as a national heritage, but one's heart goes out in positive admiration to Tommy Atkins—sweating, swearing, grimy, dirty, fearless and generous Tommy.

So soon did it become quite dark that I scarcely had time to make a sketch of the enemy's position and encampment. Then the rain came on—and what a night we had! Burleigh, like most of the other correspondents, made his way back to Ladysmith the best way he could to wire off his despatches, but I remained with the troops so as to finish my sketches at daybreak. By this time I was very tired; the rain was coming down in sheets, and the poor wounded were having an awful

time. Night had fallen, and we were in pitch-darkness, with the moans of the wounded sounding in our ears, and we had to pick our way over the dead. I, unfortunately, kicked a wounded man, for I could not see him, but I turned round and sympathised with him, and gave him my last drink of whisky. We all got into an awful mess; regiments were separated, and we found Gordons were amongst the Devons, and Devons were amongst the Manchesters, and all asking where their companies were to be found; in fact, for over an hour there was extraordinary confusion. It was of no use my moving, for I could not see in the dark, so I simply stood and chatted with whomsoever happened to be near me. Bugles sounded from different regiments, calling in stragglers, while we were on the top of a steep, rocky hill, and at the bottom was the Boer camp which we had captured. I could see some lights started down below, and decided at last to risk the descent. To go up and down these kopjes in daylight is bad enough, but to go down in pitch darkness is really very bad. Wet mud and rocks—great Scot! I slipped any number of times, but eventually reached the light, which turned out to be two candles in bottles, with two surgeons hard at work with the wounded. What a sight! The battle is bad enough, but this hasty, improvised field-hospital in pouring rain—no chloroform and not enough surgeons—was simply very dreadful. Of course we had not expected such a heavy loss (or butcher's bill as it is called), and consequently the hospital arrangements were not quite so complete as they might have been. For about two hours I helped as far as I could in collecting the wounded, and holding men while they had wounds dressed. At last, worn out and mighty hungry, I succeeded in finding a Boer rug, a kaross, and, rolling myself in it, I lay down under a wagon, with a saddle for a pillow, and tried to sleep. Every now and then I could hear the shrieks of a wounded man for water, but as there was not a drop in the place it was no use, one could do nothing. All at once I heard the voice of an officer, who turned out to be Surgeon-Major Wood. He came to the wagon and asked if any of us were wounded. "No, thanks," I said; "I'm all right, but there is a wounded man quite near who keeps calling for water." But he said he could get none, couldn't find any. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am Melton Prior, and very thirsty." "Well, then,

have a drink of whisky ;” and, finding it better than nothing, I did take a stiff tot. But I could not sleep, so I got up and hunted round with him to see if we could find any water. At last we came across a barrel hanging under one of the wagons, quite full. Dirty it certainly was, but what a luxury ! Pursuing our search, we came across a wagon laden with bully-beef tins, biscuits, and cases of whisky. We called out for men to carry the cases down to the surgeons for the wounded, and he then persuaded me to come round to a big camp fire which had been made ; and here I found a lot of Boer prisoners, who were smoking and chatting with our fellows, though, I must own, rather dejectedly. There was one who spoke English fairly well, and he very honestly owned to me that his people did not mind our bullets, but they did not like the cold steel.

I was too tired to remain here long, so I returned to my wagon and my wet bed, and I slept there till morning, only to find that the two men with whom I had been sleeping side by side were both dead. As soon as it was light enough I finished my sketches of all the horrors of that evening and night and made my way down to the railway station, and found the first train going back to Ladysmith with the wounded. Colonel Frank Rhodes was in a compartment next to me, and he seemed most anxious that the train should start. He tried to induce the station-master and the guard to start it, for he told me afterwards he felt certain the Boer reinforcements would endeavour to retake the position and would certainly capture us ; and as they had taken a particular dislike to him as being a member of the Reform Committee of olden days, they would certainly have treated him without mercy. We did eventually start, and got safely into Ladysmith without being captured ; all the wounded were brought in, as well as the three guns we had captured. Considering the length of the fight, from early morning till late at night, we lost very few men. General French was very satisfied with his day’s work, as he thought he had taught the Boers a salutary lesson ; but they, I fear, thought differently.

* * * * *

Towards the end of the month General White found that the Boers were concentrating a strong force within a few

miles of Ladysmith, and that they were evidently engaged in posting big guns on a mountain which commanded the town. It was estimated by spies that there were about eighteen thousand of the enemy, so on Sunday night, October 29th, General White moved out almost the whole of his force in three columns with the idea of attacking the Boer position, and on Monday morning, having sent the 1st Royal Irish Rifles and the 1st Gloucesters with the 10th Mountain Battery to clear the left flank, he commenced a frontal attack on the Boer position. This was found to be almost evacuated, but the troops moving forward on our right were attacked by a large force said to be under the command of General Joubert himself. In order to meet this attack our artillery changed front; the right was reinforced, and some hard and brisk fighting ensued, during which we suffered very heavy loss. After pressing the enemy for two or three miles General White deemed it prudent to withdraw, and the troops were ordered to fall back on Ladysmith, which they did under a most harassing fire from the enemy. At first they fell back in some kind of order, but later on it became almost a rout, and the 69th Battery, under Major Wing, had a great difficulty in saving their guns; they were only able to do so with a terrific loss of men and horses. Even then the guns were only saved by the use of dragropes.

During the heat of the fight I was out in the centre of the plain behind some rocks making sketches of what was going on all round me, not realising the dangerous position I was in. When I found the troops falling back I also retreated from my position in double-quick time. Dr. Stark afterwards sent a sketch of me to my office representing me hard at work.

Unfortunately the column sent out on our left flank, which I have mentioned before, was surrounded in the hills, and, after losing very heavily and having fired away their last cartridge, they had to capitulate to the enemy. It was said that the bolting of the mules of the ammunition wagons was the direct cause of this deplorable business.

There is no doubt that the fight on this occasion was excessively severe, for this day was called then, and has been known ever since, as Black Monday, and I was informed that we lost over twelve hundred men, killed, wounded, and

prisoners, and we were allowed a truce of ten hours in which to bury the dead and fetch in the wounded.

On my way back to the town I met Bennet Burleigh in a most excited state rushing off to the telegraph office. "Prior, my boy," he said, "it is all over; we are beaten, and it means investment. We shall all be locked up in Ladysmith!" Riding round to my left I saw the General in conversation with Captain, now Admiral, Sir Hedworth Lambton, of H.M.S. *Powerful*, who had only shortly before arrived with his Naval Brigade and their 4·7 guns, and going forward I said, "Good morning, General; we seem to have had rather a bad time of it." "Yes," he said; "I tried to outflank the Boers, but as fast as I did so they outflanked me; in fact, they outwitted me." Who could help admiring a man who would speak as openly as that before his Staff, before every one?

A few days after, when Captain Lambton had formed a battery for his guns, he invited me to go up and have a look at it, and to watch him while he silenced the enemy's "Long Tom." But I declined as gracefully as I could, as I had heard that in the morning one of his gunners had had his head blown clean off by a Boer shell, and two other men were wounded. I said I thought I could see the bombardment much better from a certain kopje I knew, for the shells were coming over very thick.

Our army was streaming into Ladysmith all day; and so fagged out with fighting, marching, and counter-marching were the men that as soon as they entered the town they dropped on the side-walks as though they could get no further. The General very soon after this, in consultation with General French and his Staff, sent along a plan for the defence of Ladysmith, and the different regiments had their positions assigned them, which they immediately set to work to entrench. Burleigh had his cart and horses, and he soon made up his mind to go. He tried to induce me to follow him, but I said "No." I went to most of the other correspondents and asked them what they were going to do. I said, "The general opinion is that we are going to be invested. Are you going to stop, or are you going to get out?" and something like twenty said they were going to remain, and I determined to do likewise. I had seen previously almost every phase of warfare, but I had never been in an investment, and I thought I would see what

it was like. I think General French would very much have liked to remain, and I believe he was ordered out from home.

I have been asked the question why, if General French, Burleigh, and others could get out, did not all the townspeople leave at the same time. The answer is very simple—there were not enough trains to take them, and on the third day in the battle the telegraph wires were cut, the railway was stopped, and then we realised that there was no more communication with the outer world. There were Pearse, Steevens, Maude, MacHugh, Lynch, Nevinson, Lionel James, Dunn, Smith, myself, and six or eight other English correspondents, all in the same plight. We were told at one time that the Boers had threatened to poison the river, and that we should have to depend on the rain. I am happy to think they did not do so.

In ordinary conversation we all agreed that surely in a fortnight reinforcements would come up to our assistance and cut us out. Colonel Frank Rhodes, who was with us, ridiculed the idea, and said it would be six weeks or two months. He was nearer the truth than most of us, for, as a matter of fact, we were shut up for four months.

All civilians who remained in Ladysmith had to carry a pass as a guarantee of good faith, and here is my copy.

542.

PASS.

The Bearer

<i>Name</i>	...	...	Melton Prior
<i>Nationality</i>	...	...	English
<i>Age</i>	...	...	54 years
<i>Complexion</i>	...	...	Fresh
<i>Height</i>	...	...	5 ft. 6½ in
<i>Hair</i>	...	...	Bald and fair
<i>Occupation</i>	...	...	War Artist

has permission to remain in Ladysmith.

D. J. GILES, A.R.M.

for Chief of Staff Natal Field Force.

LADYSMITH, 13th Nov. '99.

At the commencement of the bombardment, to give an idea of how little we in the town realised our danger, many mornings when the Boers opened the ball with their "Long Tom," and were sending their 100-pound shells into the



6000 men fell during the fighting
at the battle of Lombard's Kop

Battle of Lombard's Kop -
General Sir George White's Army
being defeated during the engagement
at Lombard's Kop Oct. 30th 99

BATTLE OF LOMBARD'S KOP, OCT. 30, 1899.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or a list of names, located in the top left corner of the page. The text is faint and difficult to decipher.

town, some of us used to collect on the balcony of the hotel, and with telescopes and binoculars would watch the firing, while others would stand in the streets with their glasses or on the roofs of houses. Later on, when we found what a shell could do when it burst, we used to make other arrangements, and would get behind a house instead of standing in front of it!

All this time and every day the Boers were shelling the town, and day by day they brought up more guns, until at last they had, I believe, thirty-two guns pounding away at us. I used to sit in my room working, making my drawings, while the shelling was going on, and to a certain extent I became used to it. One evening three shells, one after the other, bursting in a courtyard just opposite my window, seemed to demoralise us slightly, and at last, jumping up, we went and found safer quarters to sleep in, down by the banks of the river. I ought to mention here that the troops as well as the townspeople were all digging and building bomb-proof shelters. The Imperial Light Horse dug long tunnels and then inner chambers in the banks of the river, and many a night did I spend in these, feeling pretty safe, whilst I could hear the boom and the bang as the shells burst over me. Smith and I used to dine at the hotel so long as there was anything to eat there.

We were all of us having a series of narrow shaves. I had a nasty one when a shell burst on a ridge and a large piece of it flew over and tore a Kaffir in two, and the piece of shell fell just in front of me.

It was only a few days after this that Dr. Stark lost his life. There was a general idea amongst his friends that he had a presentiment he would be killed, for every morning before the Boers began their entertainment he would start off from the hotel with a basket of provisions and a favourite cat he had, and he would go down to a choice spot he discovered by the side of the river. Here he was pretty safe, and he seldom came back until dusk, when the Boers, in the ordinary way, used to cease firing. After the shell had burst in Pearse's room all the native servants left, and Jones and his manager's wife had to do all the work in the hotel. The consequence was that the hotel was almost closed for meals, but Mrs. Gibson used to cook for about a dozen, and used also to wait on us in a room by the

side of the kitchen. We were having our dinner when a shell came over from the enemy and burst in the middle of the road in front of the hotel. We all jumped up and rushed outside to see what damage had been done, and then stood about the entrance porch chatting about it. I had been standing for some time in the entrance doorway with Mrs. Gibson by my side and Dr. Stark, who had returned from his castle of safety, was standing close by me. Suddenly I said, "Come, Mrs. Gibson, you go back to your kitchen"; and turning to the others I said, "And come along, boys; let us go and finish our dinner," and I pulled her by the arm. We had only proceeded about four or five paces when a shell struck the hotel, passed through two bedrooms, came down the staircase, ricocheted against the side wall, and then flew out at the front door, and in doing so caught poor Dr. Stark, who had taken up the exact position where I had been standing a moment before, smashing both his legs. As he fell on the stoep outside MacHugh rushed towards him, and with the aid of a lantern which happened to be there discovered that one leg was hanging only by a thread. Immediately he whipped out a strong handkerchief and called to me to give him a piece of wood. There were some posts on the verandah with wooden spikes to which we used to fix our horses by the reins, and I tried to release one of these, but could not. Then, seeing a man standing by my side with a walking-stick, I snatched it out of his hand, smashed it across my knee, and with a piece of it succeeded in helping MacHugh to make a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. Poor Stark was quite sensible, and simply moaned out, "Look after my poor cat; look after my poor cat!" We hurried him away as quickly as we could to the hospital, but, poor fellow, he only lived three-quarters of an hour. Fortunately the shell did not burst, or it must have killed fifteen or eighteen men who were standing about the door of the hotel. It only shows the luck of some people. Here was I going about all day long, while he was hiding himself, and then he came back to his fate. Had I been a few seconds longer in that place I should have had the shell instead of him.

One morning Nevinson and I arranged that we should pay a visit to Cæsar's Camp. We met at headquarters, and from there rode down the road towards the drift, as we had to cross

the Klip River to get to the other bank. The enemy had been amusing themselves all the morning shelling the town, but most of us had got so accustomed to it that we gave it very little attention, except when these affectionate messengers came unpleasantly close to us. Just before entering the drift Nevinson and I were riding side by side when a shell whizzed between us, just missing my servant, who was behind, and then burst. We just looked round to see the effect of it and then proceeded on our way. Having arrived in the river, we thought we would give the horses the chance of an honest drink, and whilst they were enjoying it and we were chatting we heard a fiendish noise as a shrapnel burst directly over our heads. I could see the bullets splashing in front of and round me as though I had thrown a handful of peas into the river. At the same moment our horses gave a spring into the air and I saw Nevinson reel in his saddle, and his hat flew off. "Are you hit, Nevinson?" I asked. "No, thank goodness, I'm all right; are you, Prior?" and it seemed extraordinary to us, and to those on the bank who had seen the shell burst and who felt sure we three were killed, that we could possibly have escaped. But it was in a sense explained afterwards that a shell bursting directly overhead spreads outwardly, and we, being in the exact centre of the cone, had luckily escaped with our lives.

By this time the banks of the rivers were perfect rabbit-warrens, for caves had been dug, into which the civilian families, men, women, and children, used to go down at three or four o'clock in the morning, and remain there until the firing ceased, which was generally about 6 p.m. You may understand that this was absolutely necessary, from the fact that in one day we had eight hundred shells fired into the town from guns in different directions.

There were times when we thought that the enemy was getting sick of it in the same way that we were, and when meeting any one in the street the same question generally cropped up—"Have you any news? Do you know where our relief column is and when it is expected?" On the 14th of November we had a very nasty day, and the enemy seemed to be extra energetic. I had been talking to Mr. Faulkner in the smoke-room of the hotel, we had just said "goodbye," and were going out by separate doors when a shell came through

the ceiling and burst just above the mantelshelf. The gas from the explosion blew me down the passage, where I floundered on all-fours. Although the proprietor and Mr. and Mrs. Gibson were at lunch in the next room none of them was hurt.

The next night we had a very violent thunderstorm, with continuous lightning, and yet the Boers kept banging away at us. First a fearful flash of lightning, then a crash of thunder, then a bang of "Long Tom" or "Puffing Billy," followed fifteen seconds later by the crash of a hundred-pound shell dealing death and destruction all around.

One of the greatest difficulties that the correspondents had to deal with was getting letters, telegrams, and sketches out of Ladysmith, for each Pressman was vying with the others to get the latest news away. Fortunately we had a large number of natives in the town who knew every inch of the country, and after a time these men were induced to act as runners, but the prices they demanded for the risk of getting through the Boer lines was something appalling. G. W. Steevens was well known to have paid as much as seventy pounds to his first runner. I made my sketches carefully, then traced them on the thinnest paper I had, folded them up into as small a compass as I could, and the first six I sent away cost me no less than fifty pounds. The native who undertook this journey left Ladysmith at night and went towards the lines of the Boers who were investing us, and then hid during the day. At night he would either sneak through their lines or join the Kaffirs they had with them, and by that means escape detection. This man had to take our envelopes down to Colenso, get the receipt from the post-master for them, and then return with the same into Ladysmith, when they were paid the amounts promised. Generally two or three of these Kaffirs travelled together, and one week one of these postmen came back to say that the others had been shot, and that he had only escaped by a bit of luck. Unfortunately, my man was killed, so my sketches were lost, but I made more tracings and sent out another Kaffir. This fellow was captured and his sketches taken from him; he was thrashed, and then sent back to us as an example. Once more I made tracings, and sent a third Kaffir out. This time he got through and brought back the receipt from the post-master. But the expense of these men was so

great that at last headquarters took the matter up, and the Press Censor arranged for a regular post once a week. He had a regular string of runners who became so accustomed to running the gauntlet that they did it week after week in perfect safety, and the price was fixed by headquarter Staff at fifteen pounds each letter. I have often been asked as to how we correspondents could pay these enormous sums. That is easily explained, for our different offices paid the amounts to Government, and after paying my first fifty pounds the other letters went through the Press Censor.

Showing to what an extent the troops accustomed themselves to the shelling, and how little they cared about it, I remember one day the 2nd Gordon Highlanders were playing at football when a shell plumped in amongst them. Fortunately no one was hit, and they went on playing. The Boers were so interested, apparently, that they gave up firing, and actually sat on the edge of the hills and watched the game. Then, when it was all over, the firing started afresh.

For two nights we received messages from General Buller by signalling in rather a novel fashion. A powerful electric light was thrown on the clouds in the ordinary Morse system of dots and dashes. The messages were easily seen and read over fifty miles, but it was only headquarters who knew what the message was as it was sent in cipher.

As soon as it was known as a certainty that we should be invested, General Joubert sent in word to advise that the women and children of non-combatants should be sent out and a camp formed half-way between the Boer lines and the British, which position would be respected, as he intended to shell Ladysmith. I believe he gave us three days' notice. By the end of that time the entertainment commenced. With what I thought was splendid forethought, I succeeded in buying six dozen bottles of beer, four cases of claret, and two cases of whisky, which I thought would last me splendidly for the fortnight I had in my mind; but when Colonel Frank Rhodes said it would be six weeks or two months I thought I would like to lay in some more for fear of accidents. On going over to the hotel I found men already in possession, so to speak, for Colonel Edward Ward, who all through proved himself a masterly commissariat officer, executing the General's

orders, had sent round notices and guards to all the stores and had commandeered everything they possessed, and from that moment we were not allowed a glass of beer or a glass of whisky at any one of the stores. Of course it was absolutely the correct thing to do. We were too late and our chance of replenishing our stock was gone. Wagons were sent down, and everything at the stores, from tinctacks to a glass of beer, was commandeered and carted away and packed in some enormous warehouses, over which sentries were placed; and during the whole time the siege lasted we could not obtain a tin of milk or a piece of soap without a special order. There was a regular list of rations for the troops and a special one for the civilians. Milk was also a very difficult thing to obtain. Mr. MacHugh was very ill for some weeks, and milk was one of the few things he could take, and although the doctor signed the requisition papers I had as much trouble to obtain an order for a tin of milk as I had to get a bottle of whisky.

When we came to the end of the cattle it became a question of horse-flesh, and the troops as well as the townspeople had to live on that. First of all the spare horses were taken. They were mostly taken when out grazing, and one morning my man came to me to say he could not find my horses. I expected they had gone to fill the cooking-pot, and it was of no use troubling about it. After that they had to start on the cavalry horses.

No milk, no sugar—no anything, in fact! Yes, for close on two months I tasted nothing but horse meat, with the exception, perhaps I ought to mention, of one or two fish about the size of sardines that Smith, who was a great fisherman, used to catch sometimes outside our tent.

Rations were so scarce, and the ordinary soldier so hungry, that an officer of the 5th Dragoon Guards assured me that when any of the horses were killed by the Boer shells on the outskirts of the town, the men would rush out under fire, cut steaks out of them, and bring the meat back to cook.

Colonel Ward had a splendid second in command in the person of Colonel Stoneman. His office was in the main street, and he used to work at a table set in a window facing Bulwana Hill, on which the Boers had their 100-pounder,

and so devoted was he to duty that even when the Boers were firing their big gun and the shells were passing over his house or round him, he stuck to his work, and his courage and daring were so great that he infused the same sort of pluck into his clerks, although they used to own to me, personally, that they wished to goodness when the heavy firing did take place that he would go down into his shelter and give them the chance to hide away. I was chatting with him one morning in that same room when Bulwana opened fire, and when a shell burst within fifty yards I begged him to come away and take shelter, but no—he stuck to duty. I bolted out, however, only to learn that the shell had passed through a warehouse lower down the road, and had blown the left side of a shop all into the street. Going down to examine the damage, I saw two ladies in white dresses and parasols some distance down the street, and as they came forward another shell from Bulwana came over, and, strange to relate, struck the same warehouse and blew out the right side of the same shop, narrowly missing the owner and some friends who were inside at the back; but the thing that puzzled me beyond all measure was to see those two ladies calmly leave the pavement, walk round the debris caused by the bursting of the shell, and then continue on their road up to the town. Talk of cool pluck! I do not know that during the whole siege I saw a finer example of it.

I have been rambling on without mentioning that when I left the auctioneer's furniture storeroom Smith, MacHugh, and I found a capital little retreat down by the banks of the river about a mile out from the town, and here we put up our tent and made ourselves as comfortable as we possibly could. We congratulated ourselves that the Boers would never see or suspect where we were, when one morning we saw the 18th Hussars come down on the opposite bank and establish themselves in front of it. We knew very well that this would draw the enemy's fire, which it did occasionally, and two of the shells intended for the soldiers' camp fell short, and we had the benefit of them, fortunately, however, without any damage resulting; but one morning a shell burst just above us on the ridge, and a large piece went bounding along to the other side of the river, striking a trooper of the 18th Hussars and smashing his leg.

The men of the Naval Brigade, or the Handy-men, are always amusing, and they gave the enemy's guns some really funny names. Three of the large ones they called Long Tom, Puffing Billy, and Weary Willy; the last was so called from the extraordinary noise it made when travelling. Then others were called Tiny Tim, Silent Susan—from the fact that you never heard anything about it until the shell burst. Then there were Pom-Pom, Faith, Hope, and Charity, Lady Elizabeth, Lady Anne, and Bloody Mary, for this last was looked upon as a beast of a gun.

The Boers must have kept a wonderfully good look-out, for one day I was going over to pay a visit to the Rifle Brigade to have a chat, and to compliment Colonel Metcalf on his regiment's gallant exploit in capturing a gun on Prize Hill. I and my servant had to cross the open plain, and the enemy, spotting us, plugged in three shells as we went along, and on our return they gave us four more.

On Christmas Day the enemy saluted the happy morn by salvos of shells, and the first two that fell into the Carbineers and Imperial Light Horse camps did not burst, and on being picked up it was found that wooden plugs had been inserted in place of the fuses, and inside the shells were plum puddings. On the outside were the words, "With the Compliments of the Season."

One of the saddest losses to us Pressmen was the death of that talented, in fact gifted, writer, G. W. Steevens. He had been stricken with that horrible Ladysmith scourge, enteric fever, and had been fighting hard under the best of medical advice to recover, and was pronounced almost convalescent. But one morning the doctor who was visiting him was chatting when he noticed some biscuit crumbs near his pillow. Steevens seemed to be in quite good spirits, and had been talking what he intended to do when he recovered, but as soon as the doctor saw those crumbs his face fell sadly. Looking at Steevens, he asked him if he had been eating anything, and at the same time, putting his hand under the pillow, came across a piece of biscuit. This was almost too much for the doctor, for he knew the terrible consequences. Steevens in a cheery sort of way owned that he had been eating a little biscuit. Pulling himself together, the doctor did the best he could to cheer his patient, then saying "goodbye," he

beckoned to Maude, who had been in the room all the time, to follow him. As soon as he was outside he took Maude by the shoulder and assured him that Steevens was very ill. "Do you know I discovered a biscuit under your great friend's pillow, and he told me carelessly that he had eaten half of it. I do not think he will live the day out." This must have been an awful blow for poor Maude, who I knew to be such a kind-hearted and sympathetic fellow, and the doctor continued, "I think you had better let Steevens know that he is very ill, because he may have some particular message that he might like to give to you, as his bosom pal, for his wife, or he might like to make his will if he has not already done so. Now you must tell him that he cannot possibly live the day out." Here was an awful situation for poor Maude, but as he told me with his own lips the same day I know it to be perfectly true. He tried to buck up and then went in to Steevens. "Do you know, old chap, the doctor says you are very ill—very ill, indeed?" Steevens looked at him very hard, and said, "Very ill? Why I thought I was getting better." "No, he says you are dangerously ill." "Does he?" said poor Steevens. "I suppose you mean by that that I am going to die?" "Well, I am afraid, old chap, that is what the doctor means, and he wished me to tell you in case you had any particular message, or had any particular thing that I could do for you."

With less effort than one would have thought under such circumstances, Steevens gave his final instructions to Maude and his final wishes, and then said, "Well, Maude, we have been very good chums, and if I am going to die let's have our final drink together. Get that last bottle of champagne that I have reserved for the relief of Ladysmith." Maude assured me it was awful, but he opened the bottle, and pouring out two tumblers gave one to Steevens. He, raising himself as well as he could, touched Maude's glass with his, saying, "Well, goodbye, old chap"; he emptied the tumbler, while Maude, as he afterwards assured me, positively could not swallow his. But Steevens insisted, and thus these two chums bade each other goodbye. Steevens only lived three hours afterwards.

He died at five o'clock, and we buried him at twelve o'clock at night. We were obliged to bury him at that time as the

Boers had a disagreeable way of shelling all funeral parties, and the cemetery was a long way out of the town. It was a nasty wet night, and we sneaked along the muddy roads without a word or a light of any kind. He was followed by officers and representatives of headquarters, as well as by all the Pressmen. R.I.P.

I have often heard the Boer pluck called in question, but their attack at Majuba Hill and their attack and assault on Cæsar's Camp surely gives their want of pluck the lie. The way in which they swarmed up the side of a precipitous hill and, arriving at the top, formed sangars and then attacked our troops was surely a fine display of pluck. The fact remains that they did it, and had not Colonel Parkes called upon his regiment, the Devons, to charge and clear them off that hill, the question is whether they would not have established themselves there and eventually dominated Ladysmith.

On three distinct occasions Colonel Parkes called upon his men to charge the enemy, leading them to the assault. The Devons responded with a wild yell and dashed forward upon the rocky sangars occupied by the Boers, and out of one hundred and eighty who charged fifty-two were killed or wounded. We, who were down below by the edge of the river, knew by the terrific rattle of musketry that an awful fight was taking place at the top of the hill, and the question was all the time passing through everybody's mind, "Are we winning or losing?" And when the firing ceased and the news came that we had cleared the Boers off, and that they had retreated helter-skelter, there was no cheering, but there was a kind of "Thank God!" feeling. Smith, MacHugh, and myself had been walking up and down the bank, listening intently, and bullet after bullet came dropping around us. The Boers who were firing away did so with a very high trajectory, and the bullets came spinning over in our direction. If we went to the left they followed us; if we went to the right we could not get away from them, and when we went up the bank we found it just as bad, so we had simply to stay still and to take our chance. But, as I said before, at nightfall there was no shouting.

The following morning Smith and I went over the battlefield of Cæsar's Camp and saw the Boer dead being handed over

to their comrades for burial. It was done in this way : a dead man was put in a blanket and four or six of our Tommies carried him half-way down the ridge, and then a similar number of Boers came up and they exchanged places. This went on under a flag of truce until all the dead were safely in the enemy's hands. Then the little white flag was taken away, all friendship ceased, and we started plugging away at each other again.

At the beginning of January there was an occasional sale by auction of what might be called luxuries which the people found they could spare. Here are some of the prices these articles fetched :—

Butter, 9s. 6d. lb.	Candles, 4s. packet.	Oatmeal, 5s. 6d. lb.
Eggs, 18s. dozen.	Matches, 5s. dozen.	Potatoes, 1s. each.
Milk, 8s. small tin.	Jam, 5s. tin.	Apples, 10s. doz.
Carrots, 8s. dozen.	Beetroots, 5s. dozen.	Brandy, £3 10s.
Whisky, £3.	Gin, £2 10s.	4-oz. tin of tobacco,
American cigarettes, 10 for 5s.		17s. 6d.

Towards the middle of January Boer tobacco, which cost ordinarily 6d. per lb., was bought in open market for £4 15s., and a can of milk was sold for 25s., while whisky was £8 a bottle.

One morning when having breakfast with the Naval Brigade outside their battery, a shrapnel burst overhead. The bullets ran down the sides of the tent like hail, but never came through. Several of us went out and picked some up.

One morning, I determined to go out and make some sketches of the position held by the regiment facing Lombard's Kop. It was not a pleasant ride there as "Puffing Billy" and the Pom-Pom were always playing about this particular spot. The officers were delighted to see us, and showed me all their wonderful trenches and dug-outs, and after making all the sketches I wanted I thought I would like to make one of the Boer position. To do this I sat on a wall about six feet high, and was hard at work with my sketch-book in my lap when I heard the Pom-Pom start, and I could see the little beasts exploding directly in front of the road and coming towards me. There was no time for me to get off the wall in

the ordinary way, and all I could do was to throw myself backwards and thus save my skin, for the Boers had found my range.

* * * * *

For days and weeks we had been told that the relief column was coming in. We had heard the booming of Buller's guns; we had heard of the fights on Spion Kop, and I had become tired of hearing that the relief column was coming in. When it actually did occur I was down with the 5th Dragoon Guards. These fine fellows had no matches, and in consequence they had to keep a fire going day and night from which to light their pipes. The tobacco mostly consisted of dried tea-leaves and dried sunflower leaves, and some of the men actually declared it made an excellent smoke. It so happened that I had come across several large boxes of Bryant and May's matches, and I was engaged in distributing them to several of the non-commissioned officers—good fellows, every one. I gave five matches to one man and five to another, and with a knife was cutting up the sides of the boxes on which they could strike them, when I heard Pearse and Smith calling to me from a ridge above me. "Come on, Prior, the column's actually coming in!" "Oh, nonsense! I have been told that too often." "But really it is!" Then realising they were a little more serious than usual I climbed up the bank and joined them, and we made our way over to headquarters. When we arrived there I could see that something unusual was occurring. General White and his Staff were already in the saddle, and General Archibald Hunter turned to me and said, "Now, Prior, are you not coming out to sketch the relief column coming in?" "Unfortunately, sir," I said, "I cannot, for I have no horse and I cannot walk so far." Immediately he turned to his servant and instructed him to go and saddle his roan pony and to bring it along at once.

"There, Prior, I will lend you one of mine." I thanked him then, I thank him now.

By this means I was enabled to ride out and actually to see the relief column coming in.

I was one of the witnesses of the historic meeting of General White with General Buller; and certainly the latter was a hard

nail. He looked as though he had had a very bad and trying time of it; his face was red and peeling from the sun, and his helmet was battered in, but he was the same hard, dogged, determined Buller.

Having shaken hands with General White, General Hunter, and others of the Staff, he spied me, and riding up he said, "How do you do, Mr. Prior?" "Very well, thank you, sir. But you, sir, look as though you have been in the sun." "What do you mean, Prior? I haven't been to bed for three weeks; I haven't had my clothes off for three weeks!" With which he rode on to receive the congratulations of others.

After this I was very soon amongst the officers of the Staff and cavalry who had followed Buller in.

We were relieved on the Wednesday night, and I left in a wagon for Colenso early on Friday morning. It was a kind of trolley, and we sat on the bare boards and dangled our legs over the sides. We were the first out of Ladysmith and the first on the road, as proof of which we had to halt occasionally to cut the entanglements that had been put up by the Boers.

Before arriving at Colenso we had to pass through a Boer entrenchment, and I was not at all surprised that Buller had not been able to turn the enemy out, for the position was immensely strong. At Colenso, as soon as we entered the train, the people at the railway station, finding we had just come out of Ladysmith, piled sandwiches and beer into our compartments. It was their way of showing how pleased they were that we had been able to hold out as long as we had; and no doubt it was something exceptional, for the day before the relief column came in I was chatting with Colonels Ward and Stoneman, and we all three believed that Buller had again failed in his attempt to get to us, and I fully expected that we were in for another two or three weeks' starvation rations. Colonel Stoneman said, "Well, if that is the case, the sick must die, and it will only be the fittest and strongest men of the garrison who will be able to live through it." This showed me pretty clearly in what straits we were as to provisions. One of the things that frightened me and most of us, and was, in fact, a perpetual nightmare, was the knowledge that if any of us now got ill with dysentery or fever there was

nothing to help us, all medical comforts being finished. We one and all felt this horror.

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I took steamer from Durban to the Cape, intending to work up to Bloemfontein to join Lord Roberts in his forward movement to Pretoria.

My object in going to Kimberley was to make a trip overland to Bloemfontein, which Lord Roberts already occupied; but to my disappointment I heard that this would not be possible, as small parties of Boers were patrolling the road, and the only way to reach Bloemfontein was by railway via Normal's Pont.

I started off and reached Bloemfontein without any particular incident, except for the constant fear that some wretched Boer would have put a dynamite cartridge under the rails and so blow the engine off the track.

At the Orange River, where the train stopped for some time, I heard a jolly voice call out, "Well, Prior, how are you? Won't you come down to our camp and have something to eat and a nice whisky-and-soda?" I could not resist this, so followed the owner of the voice, whom I found to be Lord Rosmead, and at the camp he introduced me to a dozen or more officers, and they drank my health and congratulated me on getting out of Ladysmith looking so well. This sort of thing was very pleasant; in fact, I am conceited enough to like the nice things that were said. Altogether it was a charming interlude in a monotonous two days' journey.

In Bloemfontein I succeeded in getting excellent rooms at the Free State Hotel.

The journey from Bloemfontein to Pretoria we knew would be a long one, something like two hundred and fifty miles, and the correspondents were all providing themselves with cars for the journey as we did not know when Lord Roberts would decide on his great forward movement. All the Pressmen were buying cape-carts drawn by horses, for which forage had to be carried and provided, but knowing that the column could not travel quicker than two and a half miles an hour I decided to try to obtain a small wagon with some oxen which would feed themselves. Passing a butcher's shop I saw the very thing, a four-wheeled, tented, light wagon, and entering the shop I got into conversation with the owner, and eventually

we succeeded in coming to terms for the purchase, and he promised to supply me with four of the finest pole oxen to be had in the country, and in a few days he certainly succeeded in carrying out his word. These oxen were so powerful and yet so tame that they were more like sheep. There were two leaders and two wheelers out of a magnificent span belonging to a rich Dutchman. The price was heavy, for I paid twenty pounds apiece. I then took the wagon to a carriage-builder, had it scraped and painted, and relined with enormous pockets hanging all round it. At the bottom I was able to put all my stores and baggage, then half-way up there were boards on which to place two beds on which we could sleep at night. There were curtains in front and doors behind, and I think I may fairly say that in all my travelling experiences I have never travelled so comfortably as I did in this wagon. The oxen were so good that they would trot along at the rate of four miles an hour.

Rudyard Kipling was staying at the same hotel as I was, and we dined at the same table. I found him a charming man and absolutely without an atom of "side," and it was interesting to compare his natural manliness with the offensive style of some of the other men one met out there. At this time he wrote a poem on the death of General Joubert.

At the beginning of April we had quite an exciting time, for a column of ours was on the march into Bloemfontein when it was surprised by the Boers, who were in ambush, and the fight was terrific. The G Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery had a particularly bad time. Nevertheless, they saved their guns from falling into the enemy's hands. The cavalry also had a bad time, for when leading the column the enemy suddenly opened fire on them. The order of "Files about—gallop!" was first given by the Colonel and then to the men by Captain Pack-Beresford, the men galloping back as hard as they could. The artillery then came into action, but the men and horses were mown down like blades of grass. Nevertheless, they won the day, and the remainder came into Bloemfontein.

It may not seem much to those who read the papers or look at the *Illustrated London News*, but the journeys we had to take sometimes to get subjects were very great, and the roads were dreadful in parts. One Sunday we rode twenty-five miles out and back, and the following day I went out with Burleigh

in his big cape-cart with four horses towards Bloemfontein Water Works, which were in the possession of the Boers, and which our troops were actively engaged in retaking. The enemy allowed us to go down actually to the building, and then started shelling us.

I don't think the remainder of my visit to South Africa provided any more exciting incidents.

CHAPTER XVI

SOMALILAND. 1903

ON the road to Somaliland, where I was ordered out at the conclusion of the Delhi Durbar in 1902, we were eight days in going from Bombay to Obbia. The ship was crammed full of hospital stores, and there were something like ten surgeons, all jolly good fellows, the head surgeon being Major Gee. Then there were Captain-Surgeons O'Grady, Hudson, Little, Mackendric, Wright, Parry, and Captains Bryce and Bosanquet of the transport, &c. Two of the surgeons were horribly sick the whole way out.

I could not help thinking it strange that these men, with all their knowledge of the subject, could not alleviate their own sufferings from that horrible malady.

The nearer we got to the shore the worse it looked. Sand, sand, eternal sand, with the sun beating down on it, and the surf looking very heavy and angry. As soon as we anchored a signal was made to us from the flagship, the *Canning*, of the Indian Marine, to the effect that landing was impossible.

There is a little natural harbour—if it can be so called—with a promontory, which we called “the point,” continued by a reef of rocks with a deep channel in between them, which was used by the surf-boats. We had some regular surf-boats on board, with a Madras crew of paddle-men; but even these did not think it possible to face the heavy surf which was then running.

After two days' waiting we received signals from Captain Hudleston, the Marine officer in charge on shore, to the effect that landing was possible, and that he was sending out some Massulah boats. These did the business.

Once on shore I was told that Mr. Bennet Burleigh, my dear old friend, had his tent pitched about a quarter of a mile

inland, and away I trudged with such men as I could gather to carry my luggage. Approaching some tents I saw a flag denoting "Post Office," and knowing that my old companion would not be far from there, I yelled "Burleigh!" and in a moment he sprang off the bed, where he had been reclining, and advanced with outstretched arms. How we welcomed one another I leave to the imagination; but one of his first inquiries was, "Have you brought any camels, saddles, or servants with you?"

"No," said I; "for I was informed that I could get everything in that line I wanted here."

"My dear boy, there is not a camel or servant to be had in the place. Now just look at it," he said; "there is only sand."

Here was a fix! To add to my misery he informed me that the column was going to advance in a few days, and that I could not possibly move without camels.

Later on an inspiration seemed to come to Burleigh, a man always full of resource. "A Government steamer," he said, "is going to Aden direct for supplies. The captain is an awfully good fellow and a great friend of mine, and I believe we might induce him to bring you on his return some camels from there, and you would get some good ones." And on the following day Captain Baugh promised to do so.

While I was at Obbia I was present at a most interesting ceremony—the presentation of the V.C. to Colonel Cobbe, D.S.O., for his distinguished conduct at the battle of Erigo, which was the first engagement of the present campaign. All the available men were drawn up on three sides of a square formation, a flagstaff had been erected on a little mound, and General Manning, standing close by it, made a pretty little speech to the troops. Then Colonel Cobbe was asked to step forward, and the General pinned the much-coveted prize on his breast. Congratulations all round, "God save the King!" and the show was over.

I remember Burleigh being asked how he liked Somaliland, and his reply was somewhat curt. "It is very healthy, plenty of sun, plenty of sand, but the shortest road to the public-house is a thousand miles long." Under these circumstances any man would have been compelled to remain sober.

But the climate I found perfect. For years I had been

suffering from bronchial asthma and emphysema, and in consequence had trouble in walking and getting about, but here on this coast I felt as well as possible, and could run as well as walk, even through the deep, soft sand.

Our camp was practically on the sea beach, and the sea breeze and the sun had an extraordinary effect on most of us. In my case it turned me almost scarlet, and the skin came off in flakes. Shaving under these circumstances was no treat.

Still with these disagreeables, and many more, I must own that I enjoyed the life. I was free; I was not hampered with the ordinary conventionalities of life; I had plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and lots of good fellows to chat with.

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The General very kindly invited me to dinner, and when I left my tent to go over to his headquarters it was exceedingly dark. I started off, lantern in hand, and when about half-way I suddenly recollected that two days before I had noticed an old disused well. It was like a funnel or an extinct volcano, and it must have been about fifteen or twenty feet deep. I was looking about carefully so as to avoid it when suddenly I heard a dog bark close to me. I turned my lantern on to where I heard the noise, and at the same moment must have put my foot on the brink of the very well I was trying to avoid, for in the next instant I tripped and fell and rolling over my lantern smashed it to pieces, and then went on rolling until I got to the bottom. And there I lay, numbed with pain and anxiety, my eyes, ears, and nose full of sand, and altogether a most miserable object.

After some time I managed to claw my way out, and seeing a light a short distance off I gradually crawled towards it. I found it was one of the General's aides-de-camp with lantern in hand coming towards me. He said he had heard a wild shriek, as it sounded to him, in the middle of the desert, and he came to find out the cause, and it was with difficulty he resisted a good smile. But he soon gave me a brush down and a wash, and made me presentable once more. " 'Ware wells " in future!

At last the time came when General Manning was going to the front with his column. I, unfortunately, was not quite ready, and Burleigh, with many regrets, had to go without

me. But I did not mind, because I was going on with Colonel Faskin of the Sikhs. Then the time came for us to move, and I shall always remember with gratitude the kind way in which Colonel Faskin sent down six of his Sikhs to load up my camels, and every morning that I was with him on the march he gave the same order.

The transport was inadequate to a degree, and was constantly breaking down the whole time I was with the column.

When the camels did arrive, in small batches, instead of being old seasoned ones they turned out to be simple babies, not able to carry half what they ought to, and in some cases they had never had a saddle on. It is not therefore surprising that the transport was a failure, and the native saddles were so atrocious that the commissariat, as well as the General's and Staff's transport, was constantly coming to grief; in fact, it was a marvel that the loads ever kept up; and then the sore backs—well! well!

On the day before we started I had been advised and asked particularly to draw rations for fourteen days for myself, my white servant, four Somalis, and one horse, which meant in all over 350 lbs. weight, more than one of my camel loads, and it was no mean weight in itself to add to my tent and other campaigning gear as well as my servants' things.

Colonel Faskin had decided to start very early; 5.30 was the hour given, which meant that all the packing of the animals had to be done in the dark. The six Sikhs arrived outside my tent about 3.30, and how they managed to pack all my stuff in the dark and not leave anything behind was a marvel. I did not attempt to help or interfere; I simply kept away, and when they said all was ready I mounted my horse and started off with the column, with my riding-camel following me. I thought it was wise to have the latter close handy, in case my horse failed over the deep sand, for I knew only too well that I could not walk far. As it was, on the second day my pony showed such signs of fatigue that I was obliged to change. The fact was he had had no exercise lately; the sudden journey was too much for him, and the loose, deep sand told on him, but he recovered after a day's rest.

Drawing on one side a little I watched my cavalcade come along. First came my Aden Arab man leading the first camel,

which had on its back my tent and poles, two enormous water-proof sheets, then my hold-all full of bed-clothes, rug, pillow, boots, &c., then my tin case full of papers and clothes, my kit-bag and hatbox with an extra helmet; then my bedstead, table, and chair, and sundry other small articles.

The second had two enormous boxes of stores, whisky and brandy, and various boxes of rice and rations issued. Then came my water-camel with about forty gallons of water. The fourth camel had more boxes of stores and servants' bundles and horse's food, and the fifth had the remainder of my 350 lbs. of rations, and odds and ends, grass-mats and horse-rugs.

At 10.30 we arrived at Gobarwein, having done ten miles. Here we halted, and the next morning, after more packing in the dark, we left for Lodabal, and had a very bad march of sixteen miles. The last two miles were especially bad, for the heat was terrific, and no less than seventy men fell out. One of the sappers and miners, although suffering from heat apoplexy, still pluckily struggled on, but unfortunately he arrived in camp only to lie down and die. He was buried at five o'clock in the evening. He was well in the morning, marched sixteen miles, died, and was buried—all in twelve hours.

We were all very much done up, even those riding, for the heat was so great from the sand and sun. We camped here for the rest of the day. With this column was a Wireless Telegraph Corps, and at this halting-place we were able to communicate with those in command at Debit, a distance of thirty-six miles, which was then considered the longest distance a message had been sent overland with Service instruments. This halt gave me time in which to work up sketches I had made on the road.

Colonel Faskin, after the experience of the two days' trudging in the heat through the deep, soft sand, decided that we should march at night, and the next evening we left at 5.30 for El Dibber, a distance of eighteen and a half miles, which happened to be through a very rough part of the country. We had a splendid moon, and arrived at our halting-place at 1.30 in the morning. Unloading camels, pitching tents, and fixing up sleeping quarters at that early hour is no joke, and I threw myself on my bed in the open, but the dew was so great that I woke up as though I had come out of a bath. The same

evening, the 9th, we left again at 5 p.m. for another moonlight march for Debit. This was only fourteen miles distant, but the road was still through very difficult thorn bush, and we arrived at midnight, having made only about two miles per hour. It was a very trying march for all of us; constantly halts were called so as to enable straggling animals as well as men to close up, and at those times I used to throw myself off my horse on to the ground with the rein wound round my foot, and I was asleep immediately, the horse remaining as still as possible. During one of these halts I had the unspeakable misfortune to break my last pair of sketching pince-nez—I expect when throwing myself on the ground. I must have fallen on them, and I was reduced to my last pair of spectacles.

We had always heard that the water was very good and in any quantity at Debit, but we were very soon disillusioned on this subject, for we found that there was not only a very short supply, but it was remarkably nasty and unhealthy. Luckily I had been careful with the good drinking-water I had brought with me, and had kept a large quantity of it under a padlock, and this I kept religiously for absolute personal use. On the 11th a notice was sent round that officers would be allowed one gallon and natives and servants half a gallon per day, and no washing allowed. When one comes to think of cooking and tea and washing plates, besides drinking, a gallon is not overmuch for all purposes.

From here a relief supply column left with stores for General Manning, who, with his flying column at Galkayu, only had enough rations to last until the 20th, and this particular column could not arrive before the 18th, so if any accident had occurred the Galkayu troops would have had two days' stores with a six days' march. Running it rather close, I thought. On the same day our Colonel had to send another column back to Lodabal to fetch up more stores for us. On the 13th a notice was sent round to say we could draw four gallons of water. This was a luxury indeed, and many of us indulged in a tub, and washed our spare underclothes.

We remained at Debit for some days without excitement of any kind, until an order came in from the General down at Galkayu saying we were to advance on the 18th, and the Colonel and the commissariat officers were mighty busy care-

fully working out plans as to how they could carry rations for the troops with the few camels we had left. Also the water question was a very serious one. The transport had almost been a failure from the beginning, and now had almost completely broken down, so much so that the Mountain Battery was sent back to Obbia because the mules could not be fed.

We left here at five o'clock in the evening, and marched by daylight up to 6.30, when night set in; then we went on in the pitch darkness until the moon rose about 10 p.m. After that we continued until we reached another halt, a distance of fifteen miles; but from here we had two heavy marches to do—one of twenty-seven miles and another of thirty-seven. The latter was cut into two, but without coming to any wells, so we had to arrange to carry water. I started with sixteen gallons or more of good water, the thermometer registering over 100° in the coolest and shadiest places we could find. Drawing and writing were done under very trying circumstances. I had a double-fly tent open at both ends, yet I had to wear my pith helmet, for the wind coming through was just like that out of a furnace.

At last we arrived at Galkayu after some hard night marching, ten hours in the saddle at a time, and in the daytime it was so hot that sleeping was out of the question; in fact, we were going day and night without any proper rest. As I approached the camp I heard the celebrated and irresistible whistle from Burleigh. He doesn't use his fingers for the purpose, but blows in some extraordinary manner through his teeth, and he can make himself heard for over a mile. In a few moments I was sitting down to lunch with him, and we were exchanging experiences. I then set to work, and after dinner I retired to that good night's rest of which I was so sadly in need.

At Debit I had to order one of my boys six cuts, and I sent him with a note to the Provost-Marshal asking him to give the six, and of course the boy most innocently delivered the letter. He was then detained, and the Provost-Marshal ordered him to be tied up to the camp whipping-post and to be thrashed. Two or three days after this I sent him with a letter and some tobacco and matches to the transport officer as a present. The boy looked at me with a downcast face, but went all the same. When he saw Mr. Emmett, the officer,

he threw the letter and parcel at his feet and bolted for dear life, evidently thinking he was in for another thrashing.

On the march we captured several of the enemy's spies, and a rope was passed round their necks, the other end being held by Sikhs.

At last the morning arrived when Burleigh and myself started on our little expedition from Behra to Bohotle across the Houde, and we knew very well that we should be several days on the march without any possibility of obtaining water. We drew rations for ourselves and servants for a week, and our water-tins, and in fact anything that would hold water, we filled up. We had bidden good-bye to all the good fellows that we knew in camp, and overnight they had all wished us good luck. We had also packed everything ready for putting on camels, and at 6.30 in the morning away we went. Our two ponies were in great condition, for they had not only been well fed but well exercised day by day. There was just a soupçon of excitement in this journey we were undertaking, as we knew there was just a possibility of meeting a few of the enemy, as also there was a possibility of coming across some wild beasts. But even being on the *qui vive* palls in time, and the riding became almost monotonous, especially when on camels which can only do about two and a half miles an hour.

These animals, with our servants, kept plodding on, hour after hour, and sometimes Burleigh and myself would make a halt, either examining some quaint plant or an enormous ant-heap, or it might be to treat ourselves to a little whisky-and-water; then we would just trot along, catch up our camels, and with a cheery "Hullo!" to our servants, we would ride on, following the spoor of other animals that had been on that road before, for this was the only indication of a road. Then, perhaps having gone three or four miles ahead, we would once more halt, and possibly lie down and wait for our animals, let them pass us for another two or three miles, and then ride on and catch them up again; this sort of thing went on for hours.

We made a break about one o'clock, off-saddled and unloaded the animals, and let them go out to graze; then at four o'clock we loaded up again and started off, and continued in the same formation until 7.30, when we arrived at Badwein, having done twenty-three miles. Here we filled up our tins with

water, and at 3.30 in the morning we started on our seventy-two mile march, without the likelihood of meeting any one until we arrived at Damot.

We continued in the same way day after day, and as we did not come to any station at night we had to build a zareeba for ourselves. We halted for the night in a position as near to several trees as possible, and then all hands set to work to cut down thorn bush, which we then built up as a hedge in a circle. The camels, as well as the ponies, were brought in and tied down, our beds were stretched out, and having partaken of dinner, we turned in, one at a time, however, for we had arranged that one of us should keep awake and do three hours' patrol round the zareeba with two of our servants, and watch for wild beasts, the hyænas being particularly impudent in these parts. We kept a fire going all night in the centre of the camp.

Having done my three hours, I woke Burleigh up to do his turn, not that I think he cared for it, and I slept heartily, knowing that he would fulfil his compact religiously, and would not play tricks with me as H. M. Stanley did in the Ashanti expedition, of which I have written an account in the beginning of this book. Nothing untoward occurred during the first night, and we woke up early and continued on the road, forming another zareeba as on the previous night. It was my turn to go to sleep then, and I was in the middle of a most happy dream when I was suddenly startled out of it by a shot, and, jumping up in bed and rubbing my eyes, I heard another shot. In another moment I was out, reaching for my revolver. Hurrying over to where Burleigh was, I found him roaring with laughter, for he had just shot a hyæna. It was a lovely moonlight night, and we could see half a dozen of them sneaking all round us. One or two more shots, and they appeared to slink away. By this time it was Burleigh's time to turn in. Curiously enough, during my whole three hours of being on watch I did not see the slightest sign of another beast.

At five o'clock in the morning we were up and away again, and we arrived at Damot, having accomplished fifty-two miles, which made in all seventy-five miles in three and a half days, which we were told was an exceedingly good march.

Here we were welcomed by Captain Davis, who was in

command of the wells, and he was more than delighted to see us, for he had been weeks there leading a solitary life. Captain Cleary, who was waiting for an opportunity to go on to Bohotle, asked to be allowed to join our little cavalcade. Most of the water here reminded one of Homburg and Harrogate.

I think I ought to have mentioned earlier that the heat in the middle of the day would sometimes be as high as 125° and 130° in the coolest shade, and the water which we carried in our tins was so hot that when we poured it out for our horses and camels to drink they absolutely refused it; in fact, I could not bear my hands in it. It was very close to boiling, and the animals had to wait for night before we could give them a drink.

When the sun goes down it seems to turn dark very suddenly, and that night it was absolutely so black that although my man John was in front of my horse's head, I could not see him. About seven o'clock, in the distance we saw some lights, and our men, yelling out, made a bolt for them, and the welcome news turned up that this was the native encampment at Bohotle, and in another quarter of an hour we had arrived at the headquarters zareeba. We were invited to dine with Colonel Swaine, Majors Pollard and Lee, and other officers of the Staff. Colonel Swaine said that as Captain Hughes had gone out with Major Gough on an expedition, I might make use of his hut to live in, while Burleigh had Major Walker's, who was also with Gough.

At Damot we heard of the awful disaster that had occurred to the column under Colonel Plunket, but here at Bohotle we found that the details of this terrible mishap had been pieced together from the narratives of the few native survivors, for no British officers came out of that deadly fray alive. The tale was as complete and circumstantial as any we are ever likely to obtain.

It appears that on the 17th of April Captain Olivey, with a company of the 2nd King's African Rifles, was sent to search for water. As their absence grew prolonged, Captain Vesey, with fifty of the 2nd Sikhs, was sent in search of them. About two miles out the two parties met, and at the same time were attacked by the enemy. Colonel Plunket then pushed forward and pursued the Mullah's force for about five miles, but upon emerging upon an opening in the bush he discovered that his



COLONEL PLUNKETT'S FIGHT TO THE DEATH NEAR GUMBURU, APRIL 17, 1903.

force of two hundred and thirty fighting men and a number of followers was surrounded by thousands of Somalis, and an awful fight then ensued, our men resisting grandly to the last cartridge. Then when it came to a hand-to-hand fight the battle was soon over, and the brave little band perished almost to a man; and so closed one of the most tragic incidents in our military annals. The officers lost in this disaster were Colonel Plunket, Captains Johnson, Stewart, Olivey, Morris, Mac-kinnon, Vesey, and Sime, and Lieutenants Gaynor and Bell.

On the following day a galloper came from Major Gough, informing us that he had had a severe fight with the enemy, and that he was returning with his wounded, which we knew would make the march a slow one. And it did.

This was not a satisfactory campaign.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR. 1904-5

MELTON PRIOR did not succeed in taking his usual active part in this war, and his failure, though he was in no way responsible for it, galled him. I have thought it well to bring the present volume to an end with extracts from his correspondence; for they show clearly how keen he was to do his duty at any risk, and how the thought that his beloved office was without sketches from the front actually made him ill. At this time he was nearing his sixtieth year, but his energy was that of a young man: indeed, he never grew old, and had he been spared would doubtless have remained to this hour second to no correspondent of his generation in activity and resource.—ED.]

February 7th. (R.M.S. Empress of Japan.)

At last we were nearing Yokohama, after a most disagreeable voyage. It is well known that January is the worst month for the Pacific, and it has proved to be the case with us, for we have had bad weather all through, and our table at meals has been very badly attended right up till now. We were to have had forty passengers, but in the end only twenty started, so we have been a very small party, and the only three ladies are wives and sisters of correspondents. I have made two or three sketches on the voyage, but under very great difficulties, as we have not been free from pitching or rolling for an instant, and even now I have to catch hold of the table to save me from sliding out of my seat. We are, of course, very anxious to know the news, and it is amusing to hear the different ideas our men have as to what the news will be. I am satisfied there will be *no* war, and some passengers agree with me. Maxwell is on my side. The captain hopes war is not declared, as he has this ship full of flour, and it might be considered contraband of war if we were overhauled by a Russian ironclad.

We have arrived at Yokohama, to find (I regret to say), that war has actually started, and you can imagine what a rush and excitement we are all in. The country is crowded with correspondents, all making arrangements for servants and means of transport. I am going up to Tokio in an hour to obtain my war pass. Bennet Burleigh has gone on to Korea, but has left a letter for me to hurry on. He has taken (as transport), "jinrikshaws," which are very light two-wheeled, man-drawn carriages, and I am going to do the same, for we have to carry everything for our comfort. Nothing is to be obtained in Korea but rice and native food, so we have to take tinned things of every description; in fact, I have once more to set up housekeeping. It is awful work thinking of all you want, saddlery, food, bedding and tents. I must say we have had a very disagreeable passage—never still for a moment—and I feel now as though I were still rolling about. The Japs are plucky people to take on the Russians as a foe; they have nothing to gain. I am travelling now with Maxwell, Brownell, and MacHugh. I saw Lionel James of the *Times* this morning; he goes on to-morrow. We are advised to buy all we want at Nagasaki, as we shall sail from there. . . . I fear this is going to be a hard and severe campaign.

February 17th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

I came straight on here from Yokohama (on landing) and found this an excellent hotel, with such a nice manager. The following evening there was a torchlight procession in celebration of the victory at Port Arthur, and it went off in good style, and although the people were mad with joy there was no rowdyism—they certainly made a most remarkable gathering. A meeting has just been held by the correspondents at the request of the Government to settle about our transport in the field, and we arranged to have a contractor who undertakes the whole thing, and will always have our tents pitched with headquarters. I have never known this before, but it sounds awfully good, as we shall be able to go about independently, and then at night know for certain that when we find headquarters our luggage will be there, because you can easily imagine what a horrid anxiety that matter is. We do not know, and cannot even guess, when we are likely to be going over to Korea, but it is

quite certain that it will not be until Japan is master of the sea. I have obtained a tent, and my name is painted on it in letters about a foot in size, in English and Japanese. We have all obtained the same, and we have sleeping-bags lined with fur, but our bedsteads are a failure. Then we have large boots with double socks filled with eiderdown, and washleather waistcoats with sleeves, as the cold wind is said to be awful; and again, when the snow ceases, the country is a mass of greasy mud for two months at a stretch, so fancy what a place the campaign is to be in. It will be a comfort for us to be together, however, as we shall help to cheer each other. I have not come across Burleigh yet as he is at Nagasaki, but shall do so, I hope, very soon. There are going to be great rejoicings and festivities over the fact of the two cruisers from Italy having arrived safely here, and the crews, composed of English and Italians, are to be entertained here at a dinner to which we are all invited; and most of us English are invited to dine at the British Legation. To-morrow we all lunch with General Baron Kodama, who is an important man in the Cabinet, and he is going to explain the situation to us and give us instructions as to what we may or may not do. I wish this was another little expedition like Somaliland or Zululand. There one knows what to be at; but this, I think, is going to be a very difficult and hard campaign. Still it will be interesting, and I should think will afford magnificent sketching.

February 23rd. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

Here I am still with all the other correspondents, and it looks as though we shall be kept here ever so long yet. We are, of course, all mad at the delay, but personally I think the Japs are right not to let us loose in Korea to telegraph news for the benefit of the Russians. At last I have received a police pass for this town, and I shall be able to sketch anywhere. I am awfully pleased at it, as I have had such trouble up to the present, and have been nearly arrested three times for sketching soldiers. Mr. Williams of the *Sphere* was here three weeks before war broke out and got his permission quite easily, but as soon as war started the whole thing changed, and they are awfully secretive about everything and frightened to death at our giving away the movements of troops. The excitement which

we had here at the declaration of war has settled down, and the town is quiet again except when a piece of news arrives from the front, and then the principal paper in Japan, the *Jiji Shimpo*, issued a "special" (a slip), and the newsmen and boys, having obtained copies, rushed madly about the town yelling and shrieking and ringing bells to draw attention. I have sent a sketch of this to the *News*, together with a drawing of Japanese military nurses on their way to the station *en route* for the front. They have such funny head-dresses, and they marched just like soldiers, with the same swing and all in step. Their caps are like bishops' mitres in calico, with a small red cross in front, and they had their rolled cloaks over the left shoulder, white gloves, short pleated black dresses, and boots. They looked very workwomanlike, very different from the ordinary Geisha. The Rothschild of Japan, a Mr. Mitsui, head of the house of Mitsui, gave us correspondents a great dinner at the Mitsui Club on Sunday last, the 21st, followed by a magnificent entertainment, with conjuring, dancing (Geisha girls), and a short Japanese play. It was a great evening.

March 4th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

Tokio is awfully quiet, whatever may be going on in Korea or whatever the troops are doing. No one could possibly believe that a most awful war was on hand; there is no excitement and the streets are as quiet as possible, and we in the hotel simply go on as though ordinary visitors, and at the War and Foreign Offices it is the same—no excitement. . . . I am longing to get into the field, because that is where I do my best work. There is no news to send you from here as I have had no personal adventures, and the war news you have better than we have. The local papers are only allowed to publish everything *couleur de rose*, and we only have one side, whereas you know both. A concert for the benefit of the wounded is being given to-morrow.

March 8th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

At last there is a prospect of going to the front. The war people have decided to allow fifteen correspondents out of about 120 to go with the headquarters of the first column. There are eight of the English important papers and Telegraph Agencies and the *Illustrated London News*—making nine

English in all—then five American and one French, and we shall all leave to-morrow and travel in a bunch.

All the correspondents are getting up a book to be published and sold here for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the killed in this war, and it has created quite a sensation. The great bankers, Mitsui & Co., have undertaken to act as treasurers to receive subscriptions. There is to be an *edition de luxe* published at a guinea, and already there are one hundred and fifty subscribers, and the list was only opened to-day. All the clubs all over Japan are expected to want a lot of copies, and we are going to start with five hundred special copies, and the ordinary number will only cost 5s. It is said we ought to clear at least £2,000, but I believe we shall make much more. There are some awfully clever articles already written, and a wonderfully clever cartoon, drawn by an Australian, a Mr. Grant Wallace. I am doing one or two sketches for it, and so is Mr. Williams, and the book is to be called "In Many Wars," by the correspondents in Japan.

March 15th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

Since writing you last I have had a great trouble here about going to the front. In the first place the Japanese Government asked Sir Claude Macdonald to send in the names of eight of the most important correspondents to go with the first column, and my name was written fourth or fifth on the list, and, of course, we all thought this was all right, and I made arrangements the same as the others. But later on the Japs seemed to have altered their minds, and have now decided that no artist of any kind is to go with this first column, and I am to go with the second. When I heard this I was mad, and I went to see the Chief of the Staff, Field-Marshal Oyama, and then General Fukushima, who both have to do with it, but without success; nothing would move them. It is absolutely finally decided I am not to go yet. Of course I am awfully disappointed, but I cannot help it. There is one consolation, Burleigh has to go with the second column, so I shall have him for a chum. The news has so upset me that I have not been able to work, and the time I have lost running about seeing people and doing all I could to bring pressure to bear on the authorities! But the more I did the more obstinate they became. There is absolutely no excitement here, and nothing

of interest to sketch; it is maddening. I go about for days looking for subjects without success, as of course the office wants soldier sketches, and there are none, and we are not allowed to sketch them going on board ship or anything of that kind, and if we do what the Japs do not want us to do we shall be refused leave to go to the front. I am sick of these men. You can never get a direct Yes or No out of a Jap; he says it would not be polite, so he equivocates, and humbugs you.

March 20th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

The Emperor opened the Parliament here in person to-day, and we Pressmen were allowed to be present. It had been for some time very doubtful whether we should, but this morning, about two hours before the ceremony, we received our passes. We all had to go in evening dress, and on our arrival were ushered up to the gallery of the House. Just on our left were the Foreign Ministers and their suites. The hall was perfectly bare of furniture, with the exception of one chair and a little table on a daïs in a kind of alcove. We arrived at ten, and as the Emperor was not expected before eleven it gave us a good hour for sketching detail. At the exact hour a door opened and in intense silence His Majesty ascended the throne by seven steps. The Prime Minister then handed him a roll on which the speech was written, and immediately the Emperor read it. Then just looking round the hall he picked up his *capie* (plumed headgear), and descending the steps walked straight out. The whole ceremony lasted about four minutes, and yet we are expected to give a faithful representation of the scene, with all the strange costumes worn by the statesmen and officials. Of course it is absurd; but it will be done.

Really it is disgraceful the way we are being treated. They will not tell us anything truthfully, but keep on humbugging us. Under no circumstances am I to be allowed to go on with the first column, and as that has not yet left here, goodness only knows when the second will start.

March 27th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

I am still stuck here with the other men, but I am determined to start on my own account next week, and propose going to Kobe for a few days, as it is quite certain I shall not be allowed to join the army in Korea for several weeks. We

hear that the snow is melting there, and the paths (for there are no roads) are impassable. Even the troops cannot move, so it is not much use our going over to try to do what the Government cannot accomplish. Still they might let me see something of interest instead of keeping me here, where there is nothing.

April 7th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

The first batch of Pressmen kicked up such a fuss that at last they were sent off and are on their way to Chemulpo, where they will stick for some time, as they are not to be allowed to go to the extreme front before the troops are massed and ready. This I heard from all the great men yesterday. I was asked by Sir Claude Macdonald, our Minister, to an official dinner, and there met the Prime Minister, Katsura; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Komura; the Minister of War, Tarauchi, and any number of great admirals, amongst them Ito, Ijuino (?), Saito. Then there was the great Marquis Ito; Kodama, Fukushima, Oyama. The latter are the Generals who are directing everything in this war from here. Then also were the English Generals, Nicholson and Ian Hamilton, Colonels Hume and Haldane, and a few of the American Generals now here. Altogether it was a most representative meeting, and after dinner I set to work and made notes of costume. As soon as the different Generals and men walking about the hall, smoking and drinking and chatting about the war, saw me sketching—by Jove! I did have a time. They all wanted to be done, and when I had finished just making the roughest note they would thank me and shake my hand most heartily. By this means I had a chat with them all. The Marquis was very funny; he was wearing an order (very handsome) which only three men in all Japan have received, with the exception of Royalty. It is the "Chrysanthemum." Naturally I wanted to sketch it, so he whipped it off his breast, and, giving it to me with quite a happy smile, said that I could keep it until the next day. I think the old boy had dined very well. Anyhow, I soon put it back again in his coat, and putting his arm in mine and dragging me to the sideboard, he asked for whisky-and-soda for us both, and then we chinked glasses. He was mighty jovial. This is the great Ito who went to Korea. Then again I had a long chat with Commander-in-Chief Tarauchi, and he, as also

Fukushima, told me not to worry about being kept here, but to rest quietly until the proper time arrived, and he then pointedly said, "The English Generals are going to see all the fighting, and when they go so will you." I like this, for General Nicholson and his A.D.C., Colonel Haldane, are awfully keen, and I know them well, and I shall be under their wing to a certain extent, and by keeping in their vicinity I may escape being collared by Cossacks. Those are the gentlemen we all have to look out for, as they will swarm all over the country and try to cut our communications.

April 15th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

I have been very ill and confined to bed for over a week. Over a fortnight ago I felt very poorly and kept complaining and saying I felt so ill, and I took calomel and medicines of all sorts, as I thought it was my old fever, but no—each day I felt worse until I had to send for the doctor, and he immediately put me to bed and said I had a bad attack of Tokio influenza. It is quite a different thing to ours, for my temperature was up to 104 for three days, and come down it would not. But at last it came down a little day by day, until on the eighth day it was normal. I never remember such a funny attack, and I had a sharp go of bronchitis as well, so I had evidently caught a chill. The weather here is awfully changeable. . . . I was put on milk diet. I am all right again now, and am going a trip for two or three days to Myanoshita, a country place in the hills, as this is a beastly unhealthy place at the best. The moats and stagnant *green* water are so bad and the smell at times is awful. Most of the people in the hotel have been or are ill. I was well enough yesterday to go to a reception at the Shiba Palace ordered by the Emperor as a compliment to the correspondents, and as it rained all the time I was rather frightened, but I am no worse for it to-day. We had a gorgeous luncheon with every kind of wine, and the Royal footmen to serve us. The Baron Sannomiza, the Grand Master of Ceremonies, received us and did the honours. There were seventy-five of us invited, and sixty-five went. Only fancy, seventy-five Pressmen of all nationalities waiting to go to the front.

None of the military attachés have left here yet, and we are to accompany them, so I am told by the highest. I am afraid

the office must be very upset at not receiving sketches, but that cannot be helped, and we are all in the same fix. . . . Was it not awful about the Russian Admiral and officers being blown up with their ironclad and drowned? Every one is sorry, even here.

May 5th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

You must nearly be as sick of seeing, by the above address, that I am still here, as I am. Is it not shocking to think that I have been a comparative prisoner in this town for over three months! Yet it is quite certain that I cannot help myself when we realise that Bennet Burleigh, the most experienced and interesting correspondent of the day, has had to come here and wait events. He arrived about two weeks ago from Korea, and he left his servants and horses, provisions, tent, &c., at Chemulpo, and now he is told by the heads of the War Department that he must bring them all here if he intends going with the second column.

When the news of the fighting on the Yalu River and the great success of the Japs arrived here five days ago, the students arranged a torchlight procession and paraded the streets, but in the most exemplary and quiet manner, you would never have known that anything extraordinary or out of the way had occurred.

May 10th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

We had a very bad earthquake on Sunday last—the worst that has occurred here for years. I thought the hotel would fall. I was in bed and awake at 4.25 a.m. when I felt the room shake and the windows and blinds rattle. I thought it was all over, but the next instant the room actually rocked about as though on board ship. The door unlocked itself and flew open, and I thought the ceiling was coming down. When we all met in the hall it was generally agreed that a very little more would have meant that the whole hotel would have been in ruins—in fact, half Tokio would have gone. It was very severe, and I for one do not want another so bad. It is a horribly unpleasant feeling, and the worst is that you have no warning, so you cannot get into the street; had the hotel collapsed we must all have been killed.

May 23rd. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

We were informed at the War Office yesterday that we are very soon to go off; and I must say I shall be awfully glad, because I cannot possibly return home without some war sketches, and I do not intend to remain in this country after October at any price, and Burleigh says the same, so I expect we shall return together.

May 30th. (IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKIO.)

We are all still stuck here, and goodness only knows when we are likely to be allowed to go the front. The foreign military attachés are in the same position, and yet all the late magnificent fighting has been taking place with only the Jap Pressmen as witnesses. It is becoming a European scandal. We Pressmen sent a very strong letter, written by Bennet Burleigh, to our Minister, Sir Claude, calling upon him to use some strong influence with the authorities, but we do not know what effect it will have. . . . We are waiting for his answer. We also sent a very strong combined letter to General Fukushima, who is our only mouthpiece with the Government, and he sent for the correspondents to go and see him yesterday, and said he would listen to their grievances, &c., &c. The chief American correspondent and Bennet Burleigh explained our position and great desire to be allowed to go the front. It was put very strongly that we do not want anything from the army, and that we will look after ourselves, and so on to any extent, but then the General replied that the Press with the first column had given so much trouble and had complained so much that he did not know what to do. Sentries were put over their tents for safety, and they grumbled at that; in fact, there is no doubt that it is the action of the men who went first that has caused all our delay. He promised to look into the matter at once, and let us know as soon as possible; but it is only another excuse.

June 14th. (ORIENTAL PALACE HOTEL, YOKOHAMA.)

Again an extra mail is going out, so I came down last night to catch it, but finding it a day late I have been hard at work making another sketch to send off, and have just finished it after six hours' hard work. . . . The news from the corre-

spondents at the front is very bad indeed. The restrictions are dreadful, and their telegrams are so censored that when they arrive in England they are quite unreadable. Fancy what they go through. At the headquarters of General Koruki, the telegrams are censored, and are sent out later on. Then at the next telegraph station they are censored again, and before they arrive at Nagasaki or Tokio they have been through *six* officers' hands, each with full authority to scratch out anything he thinks necessary. You can imagine what a state the telegram is in by the time it gets home, and I am told that my sketches will share the same fate at the front (if ever I get there). The envelope will be opened by any officer who chooses to do so, and if he personally objects to any sketch he will extract or deface it. It is simply too awful, and yet we can do nothing. I intend to trace all my sketches and keep a record that way. No doubt you have been surprised at my always coming here and posting my letters on board, but if I did not do so my sketch letter to the office would be sent to headquarters, be opened, and the sketches examined, passed round and rubbed with dirty fingers, and consequently lose that post, while if anybody thought it necessary they would be stopped altogether without any notice being given.

June 25th. (THE SANYO HOTEL, SHIMONOSEKI STATION.)

I had a telegram from the office, "Return home," but when I realised the great expense I have had to go to in getting ready for the campaign it seemed too awful simply to throw up and go away. I have my horses, servants, tents, stores, and have paid fifty pounds to the Government contractor for the first month at the front, all of which would be a dead loss if I left suddenly. I have therefore written them, suggesting that I should give the Japanese Government a little more time, as they have assured me that I shall be allowed to go to the front and see the fighting at Port Arthur very soon, and I have determined to wait until the end of the first week in July, then if I have not left for *the* Peninsula I am determined to start home. . . . Even the men who went with the first column have seen *nothing*. . . . The worry and anxiety have reduced me to a shadow, and I am actually thinner and lighter than I was in Ladysmith. . . . I have come down here by the express permission and wish of General Fukushima, so as to be ready

to go on board a transport immediately the order is given that we may go forward, but I almost despair and fear I shall have to return without seeing anything. . . . Instead of sending, as I used to in other campaigns, six, eight, and ten sketches a week, I can only find one to post. . . . I am staying at this little hotel, but I have only my campaign kit with me. I have a lovely horse, so quiet and easy, an interpreter, servant, and groom, and here we are waiting for permission; but just another few days will decide the matter, and I shall be home either the middle of August or the end of November, feeling I have been a failure.

July 2nd. (THE SANYO HOTEL, SHIMONOSEKI STATION.)

I am still here and most anxiously waiting and expecting daily to hear I am to go to the front. I really cannot leave now, on the very eve of something very exciting going to happen. . . . I have had a telegram to-day from Burleigh, imploring me to be patient and not to leave. The Field-Marshal Oyama and General Fukushima with headquarter Staff are going to the front on the 6th, and we are promised that we shall follow them immediately. So I am stopping a little longer; but never was I in such a horrible fix.

July 6th. (SANYO HOTEL, SHIMONOSEKI.)

I go to bed in a fever of anxiety, and wake up in the same frame of mind, for I feel I am between the devil and the deep sea. To go home without seeing anything would be awful to me, and yet in stopping here I am disobeying orders and spending money. However, I have just written Burleigh to say I will remain one more week, and then I shall throw up the sponge and return home.

July 19th. (R.M.S. *Empress of China.*)

Rejoice with me! I am absolutely off to the front with Bennet Burleigh and the other Pressmen of the second column, and I really believe we are going to see the fight for Port Arthur. When I last wrote you I was mad with rage, and packed up and left Shimonoseki for Tokio with the intention of returning to England. I telegraphed Burleigh to that effect, and said that if I did not have my war pass by the 19th I should go home on the *Empress of Japan*, on the 22nd. Well, I did my two days' railway travelling back

with my servants and baggage, in all the heat, to be met at the railway station at Tokio by Burleigh with my passes for myself and servants waving in his hand, and a great cheery smile on his face, saying we were at last going to the front, so I just went to the hotel to spend the night and left again on the morning of the 17th for Yokohama. We have over a dozen correspondents on board, and many more are coming by train. It would have been awful to return having seen nothing, and the taking of Port Arthur is going to be the greatest military event of the century. We feel one and all quite lighthearted in comparison with what we have felt in the past, for now we feel we are possibly going to do something to recompense our offices for the tremendous expenses we have all put them to. . . . Good old Burleigh is writing by my side, and he takes care of me like a mother. We are steaming now through the Inland Sea, and the scenery is really very lovely. We expect to be at Kobe in about two hours.

July 24th. (SHIMONOSEKI.)

To-morrow morning we are off to the front. Our horses go on board the transport at 8 a.m., and we go on the ship at 2 p.m., and sail at 6 p.m., so really and truly it looks as though we were off to see something at last, and I have heard just now that we are going to Dalny, although the Japanese authorities are keeping it dark. I am happy in the prospect that I may see some fighting before I am returning; but I shall not have long at the front, as Burleigh and I are determined not to remain after the middle of October. . . . We have all been very busy to-day overhauling our luggage, paying wages, arranging with banks, and one thing and another.

July 25th.

The day has at last broken when we are to start on our expedition. Our horses are being put into lighters; they have to walk down steps and then along a narrow open gangway, and then jump into the sampan, so it is not curious at all that several gave trouble. The horses of Lionel James (the *Times* correspondent) refused, and made a jump for the harbour, and started on a swim and gave any amount of trouble. Mine also refused point-blank, but two good fellows, Newell and Scull, went to the rescue, and literally lifted him down and in. He calmly sat down, but they joined hands under his rump and



THE JAPANESE STORMING THE RUSSIAN POSITION IN FRONT OF AN-SHAN-TIEN.

by sheer strength forced him in. He is so gentle that he did not kick or give any trouble except from fright. He is quite white, and stands fifteen hands—rather taller than I like; still he is so very quiet and yet has plenty of go in him when it is wanted. There is no doubt he is a handsome animal.

July 30th.

At last we have arrived and landed on the Liaotung Peninsula, but for obvious reasons I do not mention the name of the place, and to-morrow, if possible, we all go to join the headquarters of the Japanese army, where Field-Marshal Oyama is in charge. But even that is uncertain at present. Naturally, all our letters have to be censored. . . . I am with Burleigh, and all right. We were six days coming on board a transport, very kindly placed at our disposal by the Government. We were eighteen in all—English, American, French and Italian. . . . I cannot give news, as this has to be read openly by an interpreter.

August 15th. (HAICHANG-HAICHENG.)

We correspondents have arrived here after a tedious ride, and, owing to the rain, it was a most horrible and disagreeable journey. On the day we reached Kaiping a Mr. R. H. Davis and I lost the road together, and when we got to the station it was pitch-dark, but we were informed by the station-master that he would not allow us to stop there, and that the town was two miles inland. He then found us a guide and sent us on our road. I could not ride my horse, as it was too big and slipped all over the place. Mr. Davis had a mule which he did not care to ride, so he kindly lent it to me. But what a night it was! It had rained hard all day, and continued to do so then; and it was so dark that I could not see either my companion or guide, so we kept up a conversation for fear of missing each other. Poor Davis kept slipping and rolling over in the mud and slush, and my mule nearly threw me ever so many times; but I managed to keep on his back, and at last, with Davis smothered from head to foot in thick mud, we arrived at the south gate of the city, and were refused permission to enter by the sentries, as nine o'clock was the latest moment for any one to enter, and it was then 11.30. But after a time a messenger was sent off to the

Governor with our cards, and eventually we were admitted. But now came the difficulty of finding the correspondents' house. At last this was found, and we started for it; but now was my time, for the mule missed his footing and put me in a ditch a foot deep in filth, and I got to our house one mass of mud and wet through. Burleigh heard me coming, and as Davis went to his friends I joined mine, and there he stood. "Come in, old chap! By Jove! what a mess you're in!" and my clothes were literally torn off me, and I was wrapped in a rug and put to bed, but not before I had drunk one of Burleigh's pints of champagne. I was done up, and slept soundly. The worst of it was that the next day it rained, so while we could wash our clothes we could not dry them.

We made another start the following morning about one o'clock, with the impression we only had a short distance to cover, but as you can never get the truth from any one here about distance, we found ourselves again in a hole. We travelled till dark, and then found we had still miles to do, and just as we arrived at a station under the impression it was our resting-place, we found it was two miles further on, and we had a river to cross. This was simply an enormous disappointment. Still there was nothing to do but to face it. Burleigh was one of the first to enter the river, and by the merest luck got to the other bank, and after frantic attempts his horse got up it. I went next, but as bad luck would have it my horse stepped into a hole, and the next moment sat down in it, then rolled over on his side, and pinned my leg under him in the river. Fortunately it was very muddy, so I extracted my leg and, standing up, beat him to get on his legs. But in the struggles in the mud he knocked me down again. This exhausted me and finished me off, so a Mr. Wallace and Mr. Whiting dashed into the river, Whiting helping me out, and Wallace rescuing my horse, for the river was running very strong. This was a lesson to all the others, and they chose another crossing, but it was so pitch-dark you could not see. Whiting's horse crossed over by itself, and he went over by a narrow foot-bridge. How wet and muddy I was again! yet had to ride two miles. But we were all alike, more or less. However, we eventually arrived at our destination, and a good sleep and a whisky soon made us forget our trouble. This part

of the country is the most awfully sleepy place I ever knew, and we all go to bed between eight and nine, to get up in the morning feeling as though we had never been to bed, and we are all suffering from local fever. Altogether we are a mass of grumbling, what with weather, transport, servants, and officialdom.

August 20th. (HAICHENG.)

I fear I must own that at last I am sick and sick of this campaign, just as all the other correspondents are. Even the stolid Burleigh is ready to return at any moment, for he feels he cannot do his duty conscientiously to his paper any more than I can. It is true we are at the front, with the enemy within four miles of us, but—and this is a very big “but”!—we are simply prisoners within these city walls, and if we very particularly wish to go outside we have to make special application, and an officer is sent to accompany us; but of course we are not allowed to go near the troops or outposts, or see anything to write about or sketch. It is simply maddening. Burleigh and myself walked this afternoon through our prison town, and were going up a slope on to the walls for a blow and to have a look round, when a sentry suddenly turned up, and with his rifle in a menacing attitude informed Burleigh he could not go there. Knowing I had been up yesterday, I told my interpreter to ask by whose authority we were stopped, and the sergeant of the guard owned he had no instructions specially, so I said I intended to go up and he could do as he liked. Then he asked me not to be long, but I stopped nearly two hours on purpose. . . . And these people are our allies. Of course there are some gentlemen among them, but my experience tells me they are smiling, deceitful liars. I am angry at the insults offered me. I am an Englishman and their ally. In all my campaigning experience of twenty-six wars, never have I had such indignities and insults thrown at me as I have in Japan.

We have just received information that we are to be packed and ready to march out to battle at 8.30 in the morning, so we are all bustle and excitement.*

* This expectation, like so many others, was not fulfilled, and Melton Prior, greatly disappointed, returned to England. He died in November, 1910.—ED.

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